

The World's Not Waiting: Students Walk Out Vs. Bush, p.5 | France on Fire, Argentina Erupts, p.11

THE INDYPENDENT

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a FREE paper for free people

The Trials of Miguel Malo

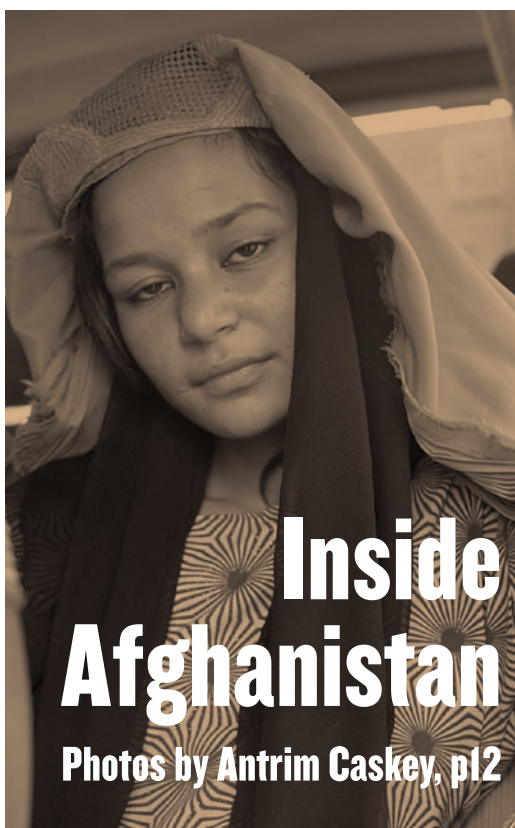
Four years, three lawyers, and over fifty court appearances since he was arrested for holding up a sign at Hostos Community College, Malo's legal ordeal continues.

His defenders at CUNY contend he's a victim of an administration allergic to free speech.

Sarah Stuteville reports, p.8

With a CUNY timeline by Christopher Gunderson & Yvonne Liu on Teaching (and Learning) at Laguardia

ANTRIM CASKEY

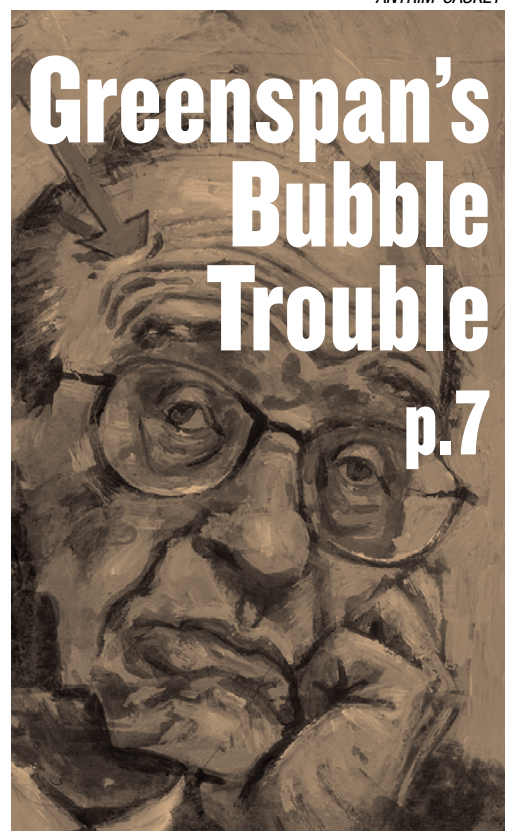


g-string: exclusive interview

The Worst of the Worst: Healing Sex Offenders, p.14



Greenspan's Bubble Trouble p.7



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With autonomous chapters in more than 120 cities throughout the world, the Independent Media Center is an international network of volunteer media activists.

The IMC seeks to create a new media ethic by providing progressive, in-depth and accurate coverage of issues. We are a community-based organization using media to facilitate political and cultural self-representation. We seek to analyze issues affecting individuals, communities and ecosystems by providing media tools and space to those seeking to communicate. We espouse open dialogue and placing the means of communication and creativity back in the hands of the people, away from the drive of profit.

The Independent is funded by benefits, subscriptions, donations, grants and ads from organizations and individuals with similar missions.

WHAT CAN I DO TO GET INVOLVED?

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The print team reserves the right to edit articles for length, content and clarity. We welcome your participation in the entire editorial process.

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Learning From Rosa Parks

BY KAZEMBE BALAGUN

Rosa Parks is the saint of direct action. Her refusal to bow down to segregation and give up her bus seat on December 1, 1955, marked a turning point in U.S. protest politics. From that point on, liberation movements began to define themselves by sit-ins, wade-ins and even bed-ins. The quiet refusal of Mrs. Parks transformed individual acts of resistance into a social movement.

Parks' action came at a moment when revolution was the main theme of the world. The colonies of Africa were fighting for independence, while black GIs returning home from

World War II demanded victory against fascism and Jim Crow. The mood brought more people into politics and public life in America and provided a challenge to racism.

This is a point lost on many of the memorials written on Parks' passing at the age of 92. For the mainstream media, Parks is simply "the bus lady" who refused to give up her seat because she was tired from a long day's work. This version of history robs the complexity of Parks' life and the civil rights movement as a whole.

Parks was a respected community member and seasoned activist, whose life intersected with the viable mass movements of the day. She was trained at the Highlander Folk School

alongside civil rights activist-teacher Septima Clark. As secretary of the Montgomery branch of the NAACP, she worked with E.D. Nixon, a member of the Pullman Car Workers Union. In fact, on the day of her arrest, she was rushing home to prepare for a NAACP youth workshop.

While in the myth-making, Parks' arrest is seen as the launching point for Dr. Martin Luther King's career as a civil rights leader, little is discussed in terms of the significance of the Montgomery bus boycott. The original boycott was to last one day, but after Parks' conviction, it was decided by the community to extend it until the buses in Montgomery were desegregated. This required the black community to create new forms of transportation, including bus and car pools, or simply to walk. The churches became the focal point of community organizing and maintaining spiritual sustenance in the face of racist violence.

In creating these organic links, the fighting capacity of the black community was strengthened. These bonds began to reflect themselves throughout the civil rights movement, as freedom schools, soup kitchens, and independent political parties all became the backbone of the Freedom movement. The direct action of Parks led to ordinary people viewing direct action not as spectators, but as active participants on a number of levels.

Parks' legacy reflected patience for people's ability to learn and a respect for a diversity of tactics. Little known is Parks' support for Robert F. Williams, the president of the Monroe Chapter of the NAACP, who promised to meet "racist violence with violence." Williams organized self-defense patrols of the black community and was forced into exile in Cuba and China. Parks delivered the eulogy at Williams' funeral in 1996, saying that, "the work he did should go down in history and never be forgotten."

On Nov. 2 Parks was remembered in her adopted hometown of Detroit when every first seat of every city bus was vacated in her honor. On Oct. 27, city councilman Charles Barron and the Troops Out Now Coalition gathered in front of City Hall to call for a December 1 "Day of Absence" in honor of the 50th anniversary of Parks' action in Montgomery.

Sisters at the Center:

The passing of Rosa Parks reminds us of the important roles African-American women have played in the struggle for civil rights. These are just a few names that should not be forgotten:

Ella Baker

"Strong people don't need strong leaders," said Ella Baker. One of the principal influences behind the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, Baker's focus on people-centered leadership became the driving force of SNCC's participatory democracy.

Abbey Lincoln

Known primarily as a sultry jazz singer, Lincoln was key in connecting the civil rights movement and the jazz scene. Along with her husband Max Roach (the famed drummer), she released "We Insist Freedom Now Suite!" and "Percussion Bitter Suite," two pivotal albums of the era. She also starred along Ivan Dixon in the civil rights movie, "Nothing But a Man."

Septima Clark

A fellow classmate of Rosa Parks at the Highlander Folk School,

Clark was an elementary school teacher on Johns Island in South Carolina. As a member of the NAACP, she formed Citizenship Schools that trained potential voters on how to pass the literacy tests. Within three years, 600 African Americans were registered to vote. In 1965, Dr. Martin Luther King insisted that Clark accompany him to Sweden when he received his Nobel Prize for Peace.

Gloria Richardson

Richardson was one of the unsung heroes of the civil rights-black liberation movement. A resident of Cambridge, Md., she served as adult advisor to the Cambridge Nonviolent Action Committee (CNAC). CNAC, along with the students of local colleges organized a series of sit-ins aimed at desegregation and job training. As the demonstrations grew, white mobs attacked the black community.

Richardson, among others, faced down both the mob and the National Guard. She later went to Africa along with SNCC leader Stokely Carmichael and supported the vibrant anti-colonial movements there. "A first-class citizen does not beg for freedom," Richardson said, "human rights are human rights, not white rights."

Fannie Lou Hamer

Hamer was a sharecropper who lived in Sunflower, Mississippi. Upon meeting SNCC organizers, she attempted to register to vote, an action that later forced her to move. Refusing to back down, she continued to organize across Mississippi, despite beatings. She was a founder of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) that challenged the all-white Mississippi delegation to the Democratic Party convention in 1964. In the late 1960s and 1970s, Hamer became an ardent anti-war activist saying in a demonstration, "We ain't gonna support no damned racist war in Vietnam."

Subways Searching for the 4th Amendment

BY BRENDAN COYNE

Nearly three months after civil liberties advocates filed a lawsuit challenging the New York City Police Department's subway search policy, a federal court has begun hearing testimony in the case. The hearing is expected to last for several days, after which lawyers for the New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU) and NYPD will offer written and oral arguments.

In papers filed last week, the NYCLU, which brought the case on behalf of five city residents, presented evidence that the police conducted 34 random searches at 5,500 subway turnstiles over a three-week period beginning at the end of August and turned up nothing related to the policy's purported purpose of preventing terrorist attacks.

NYCLU Executive Director Donna Lieberman called the bag-search policy "unprecedented, unlawful and ineffective."

"It is essential that police be aggressive in maintaining security in public transportation," Lieberman conceded in a statement last week. "But our very real concerns about terrorism do not justify the NYPD subjecting millions of innocent people to suspicionless searches in a way that does not identify any person seeking to engage in terrorist activity and is unlikely to have any meaning-

ful deterrent effect on terrorist activity."

The civil liberties group's arguments were countered in testimony by NYPD Deputy Commissioner David Cohen, who called for expanding the program.

Citing the two-year-old case of a man arrested for plotting to cut the Brooklyn Bridge's cables, Cohen said: "Unpredictability is the enemy of terrorists and the ally of those trying to prevent an attack." Random police patrols on the bridge reportedly flouted that attack, which bridge engineers say would have required several hours and heavy equipment to complete.

The NYCLU suit maintains that the policy is unconstitutional, violating the right to freedom from unlawful searches. They also warn that such policies increase the likelihood that officers will engage in racial profiling.

In response to this summer's bombing of the London subway system, New York officials implemented several policies aimed at preventing a similar occurrence in the Big Apple, including the random bag searches and contracting with Lockheed Martin to increase the number of surveillance cameras and sensors throughout the city public transportation system.

This article originally appeared on newstandard-news.net



PRE-ELECTION RESPITE

(Above) Hundreds of local cyclists celebrated the Halloween Critical Mass bike ride without incident on Oct. 28. Participants in the monthly ride have been repeatedly harassed and jailed by the NYPD during the past year. Next ride: Friday, November 25. 7pm, meet on the north side of Union Square.

(Below) Bike jousters compete in a recent tournament.

PHOTOS BY IDA C. BENEDETTO



Education

Why I Said "No" To the UFT Contract

BY ELIZABETH GUIDI

I am a third-year social studies teacher and United Federation of Teachers (UFT) delegate at John Adams High School in Ozone Park, Queens. Adams is the "best of the worst" in overly scrutinized Region Five.

The contract negotiated by Mayor Michael Bloomberg and UFT President Randi Weingarten, and ratified by 63 percent of voting teachers on November 2, finally limits micromanagement (Adams administrators require irrelevant assignments about bulletin boards and classroom seating). However, in my short career, I have seen and heard about abuses that lead me to question this contract. Randi could and should have done a much better job at her negotiations.

The new contract gives principals unprecedented control. Previously, teachers could change schools based on seniority, without an interview. With the new contract, principals have the sole right to fill vacancies. Principals also control the school budget. Why hire a veteran teacher who will cost \$90,000 a year when it is cheaper to hire a new teacher who's making \$40,000? Further, new teachers often

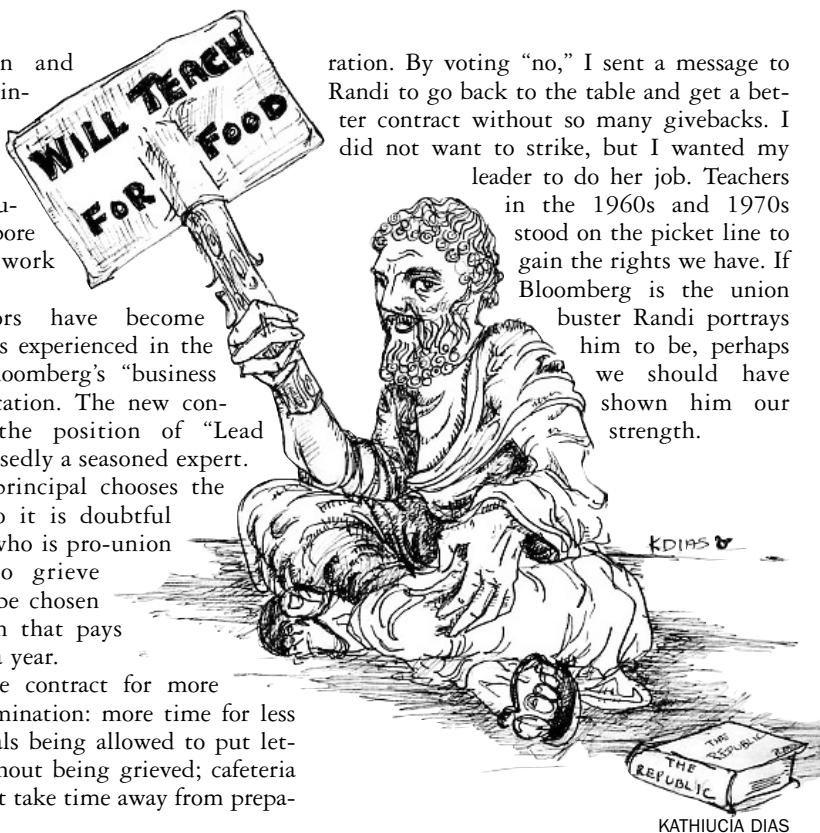
fear retribution and conform to administrators' problematic dictates (Don't lecture to the students — you'll bore them! Group work every day!).

Administrators have become younger and less experienced in the classroom — Bloomberg's "business model" in education. The new contract creates the position of "Lead Teacher," supposedly a seasoned expert. However, the principal chooses the lead teacher, so it is doubtful that a veteran who is pro-union and willing to grieve injustices will be chosen for the position that pays \$10,000 more a year.

I rejected the contract for more than age discrimination: more time for less money; principals being allowed to put letters in files without being grieved; cafeteria assignments that take time away from prepa-

ration. By voting "no," I sent a message to Randi to go back to the table and get a better contract without so many givebacks. I did not want to strike, but I wanted my leader to do her job. Teachers in the 1960s and 1970s

stood on the picket line to gain the rights we have. If Bloomberg is the union buster Randi portrays him to be, perhaps we should have shown him our strength.



Letters & Comment

Glad I found the Indy

Man I am ever so glad that for some unknown reason I saw one of those news stands and decided just to reach in and pick up a copy of a newspaper with the ever so non-descript name of INDY something or another...Just keep on writing against that mass murderer President of ours George Bush's war

in Iraq, do not ever again use the word "war," use the phrase "army of occupation," occupying army forced to kill 25,000 civilians so far for the sake of the pockets of the Bush family's oil rich neighbors and friends, Katrina relief diverted to save the oil fields in the Gulf...you know good and truthful stuff like that.

—Rev. Anthony

Blew It With the Bikes

While I applaud any effort to shed light on the anti-bike tendencies of the Bloomberg administration, I think your "Cops are Robbers" story (Oct. 19 issue) was off-base. Any daily user of the Bedford Ave. L train stop will tell you that some local "entrepreneur" has dominated all the available bike locking space with bikes he's trying to sell, leaving us regular riders scouring the neighborhood for a place to lock up. The bikes he can't sell have been left on every pole in the area, like so much trash. As a regular bike rider, I have

complained to this man personally more than once. I have also complained to the cops more than once. Though *The Independent* has painted the police lock-cutting as an injustice, I suspect that the scene your photographer captured is actually one of justice finally being done.

—Joshua Chaffin

Post Comments: NYC.indymedia.org

Send letters-to-the-editor to imc-nyc-print@indymedia.org or 34 E. 29th St., 2nd Fl./N.Y., N.Y/10016.

the city

NYU GRADUATE ASSISTANTS STRIKE

On Oct. 31, graduate assistants at New York University authorized a strike after the university refused to renew a four-year contract that expired at the end of August. The contract, which was the first of its kind at a private university in the United States, guaranteed graduate workers higher wages, health care and childcare support, among other benefits.

Under a new proposal offered by the university in early August, such benefits would have been reduced over time, said Maida Rosenstein, president of Local 2110 of the United Auto Workers, which represents the graduate workers.

In a statement posted on NYU's website, called "Rhetoric vs. Reality," the university said that it had "engaged the union in multiple conversations to see if an agreement was possible." These conversations, the posting said, resulted in a proposal that allowed the union to remain as a bargaining agent for graduate workers with non-academic grievances. "The union unequivocally rejected this offer," the posting said. "It really wasn't a contract at all." Rosenstein countered, "The university could have changed the terms and conditions at will." NYU gave the union 48 hours to accept the offer, which was promptly rejected.

The university's decision not to renew the old contract comes on the heels of a policy shift at the National Labor Relations Board in Washington. The Bush-appointed board overturned a Clinton-era mandate that granted graduate workers at private universities protection under the National Labor Relations Act.

—TIM STELLOH

the INDY SWEEPS the IPPIES

The Independent received 11 "Ippies" at the annual awards banquet held on Oct. 26 by the Independent Press Association of New York. It was the third straight year that *The Independent's* volunteer staff has garnered more Ippies than any other paper in the city.

BEST EDITORIAL

1st Place—Nicholas Powers
Honorable Mention—William Brandon Jourdan

BEST FEATURE

1st Place—John Tarleton

BEST INVESTIGATIVE OR IN-DEPTH NEWS STORY

2nd Place—Steven Wishnia
Honorable Mention—Kiera Butler

BEST ARTICLE ON LABOR ISSUES

3rd Place—Sarah Stuteville

BEST ARTICLE ON IMMIGRANT ISSUES, RACIAL OR SOCIAL JUSTICE

3rd Place—Andrew Silverstein

BEST PHOTO ESSAY

1st Place—Edgar Mata, Ida Lake & Oscar Durand
3rd Place—Antrim Caskey

BEST PHOTO

3rd Place—Andrew Stern
Honorable Mention—Antrim Caskey

NEW COURT PICK HAS TROUBLING RECORD

An Extreme Supreme

BY ANN SCHNEIDER

Harriet Miers' personal loyalty to the President wasn't the tonic the Republican majority was seeking. Samuel Alito, five years older than John Roberts, is now poised to be the fifth Roman Catholic on the Supreme Court. But more is at stake than social issues like abortion and separation of church and state.

What his admirers describe as "30 years of public service" are strictly on the side of the police and big business. Less flashy than Roberts and less pugnacious than Antonin Scalia, Alito hews to the views of the Federalist Society, which advocates striking down federal regulation. For example, University of Chicago Law School professor Richard Epstein, a prominent member of the group, argues that the Constitution should prohibit all environmental restrictions, welfare programs, the minimum wage, the National Labor Relations Act and limitations on evictions.

The Bush administration claims Alito "is not out-of-control." But he has frequently misapplied the law or overreached his role as an appeals judge to take extreme positions on employment discrimination, antitrust law and product liability.

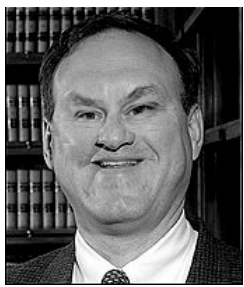
When Beryl Bray sued Marriott Hotels for race discrimination, Alito said she hadn't shown enough evidence to merit a trial. It is the trial judge's role to assess credibility and facts; the appeals court judge is supposed to make sure that the law was correctly applied by the trial court, but in this case, Alito's dissent recharacterized witness statements to conclude that there was no bias.

Alito persuaded the majority to dismiss an age discrimination case against the Orix Corporation even though the company president stated Frederick Keller was fired because he was "getting too old for the job." Alito discounted the statement because it was made four months before the firing.

Alito seized upon the Supreme Court's federalism in *United States v. Lopez*, which struck down a law prohibiting possession of guns near school zones. This case represents a turning-back to the pre-1905 days when the courts regularly invalidated health, economic and safety laws, arguing that Congress had no constitutional power to regulate when "interstate commerce" wasn't involved. In *United States v. Rybar*, Alito tried to expand *Lopez* to say that Congress had no power to regulate the sale of machine guns at all, anywhere, but *Rybar's* gun-sale conviction was upheld.

These opinions reflect only a portion of Judge Alito's time on the bench. Yet to be publicly released are his memos and opinions for the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel. Nonetheless, liberal law school professor Cass Sunstein says about half of Alito's 41 reported opinions show an ideological cast.

Alito's attempt to expand the holding in *Lopez* shows that he has an agenda. This may be why the right-wing lobbying group Progress for America announced that it will spend \$450,000 praising Alito on CNN and Fox beginning in early November.



Samuel Alito has frequently misapplied the law or overreached his role as an appeals judge to take extreme positions.

Progressives Ignored the Mayoral Race to All Our Peril

Where Are the Fighters?

EDITOR'S NOTE: On Nov. 8, Michael Bloomberg was re-elected overwhelmingly as mayor of New York City, cementing 16 years of Republican rule in city hall. Prior to the vote, veteran journalist Juan Gonzalez wrote an impassioned critique of how Bloomberg's administration was systematically dismantling democratic rule in New York, placing power and revenue in unelected bodies controlled by the city's elite. Gonzalez also took to task progressives for failing to rally behind the Democratic nominee, Fernando Ferrer. The following is excerpted from Gonzalez's analysis

BY JUAN GONZALEZ

Michael Bloomberg, a billionaire media mogul, spent more than \$100 million from his personal fortune on his re-election campaign. Democratic challenger Fernando Ferrer, a veteran politician from one of the poorest neighborhoods in the country, was outspent by Bloomberg by an astounding 17-to-1 margin.

However, many white, Black and even Latino progressive and liberal activists in the city, sat on the sidelines for the Democratic challenger. Those progressives – in an echo of Bloomberg's campaign – claim that Ferrer was a lackluster candidate and political hack. They view Bloomberg as a political moderate more conciliatory to the city's Black, Brown and poor communities than his predecessor Rudy Giuliani.

To a large number of progressives there is no fundamental difference between Ferrer and Bloomberg.

That viewpoint, in my opinion, is profoundly mistaken.

That mistake is rooted in two persistent weaknesses of the progressive movement.

1. Class and racial divisions among progressives themselves;

2. Lack of any rigorous analysis of the economic and political forces that are rapidly transforming everyday life in metropolitan America to the point that the poor, racial minorities and sections of the working class are being systematically driven out of the central cities.

I do not say these things lightly.

As a journalist who has chronicled big city politics in this country for decades, I learned long ago that outward appearances are often deceiving.

You have only to look at the traditional ruling circles of the city – the banking, corporate, real estate and media barons – to see how much they understood what's at stake. Rarely had they been so unified in their determination to

defeat a candidate who comes from the "Other New York."

As if to underscore that unanimity, a constant barrage of reports from the corporate media portrayed Ferrer as a flip-flopper, a liar, a bungler, incompetent, uninspiring and racially divisive.

My experience of more than 25 years of covering big city politics has convinced me that Michael Bloomberg, more than any New York mayor in memory, is systematically consolidating a velvet-glove takeover of city government on behalf of Wall Street financiers and the city's real estate barons.

Since assuming office he has accelerated a trend by which the ruling circles of New York's white minority population have sought to permanently transform and privatize the democratic apparatus of city government. If that transformation is successful, it will almost surely cripple the ability of the city's Black and Hispanic majority – and of candidates who defend the working and middle classes – to exercise any meaningful control over municipal government for decades to come.

But there is larger political purpose behind this strategy that few progressives have clearly understood. The ruling circles of our nation have had a big problem for many decades -- all the great American cities of finance and commerce are now overwhelmingly populated by immigrants, especially Latin Americans, and Blacks from the South. But the voting power and the sophistication of the new urban populations has prompted the elites to reinvent local government and structurally remove financial control of the cities and their land away from the new non-

white urban majorities.

Thus, it is no surprise that during the past few years I have heard the same refrain-land is being given away at fire sale prices to huge developers. The list of such mega-projects and land rezonings under Bloomberg is truly breathtaking. The frenzied construction of luxury housing has been accompanied by the decontrol of more than 200,000 affordable rent stabilized apartments, the conversion of thousands of middle class Mitchell-Lama units to market-rate housing, and virtually no construction of low-income housing.

Already more than 500,000 New York City households are paying more than 50 percent of their income for rent. The poor and working class are being pushed out, only to be replaced by the upper class.

The same kind of anti-democratic approach has been evi-

dent in Bloomberg's policies of preventive arrests and thwarting of any mass protests – whether against the war in Iraq, the Republican convention or even the bicyclists of Critical Mass.

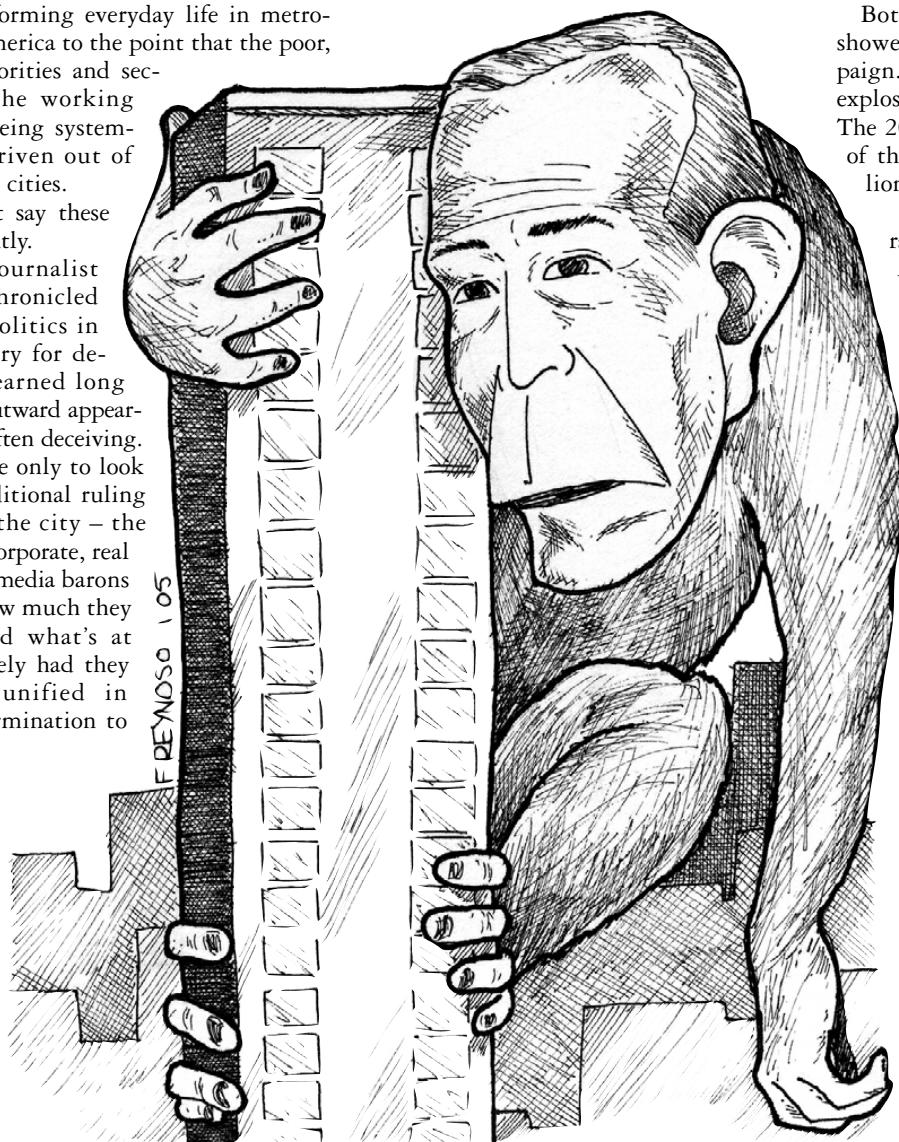
It has even been evident in public education, the area of public policy that Bloomberg claims as his greatest success. One of the mayor's first acts was to seize direct control of the schools by abolishing both the Board of Education and the 32 separate community school boards. However, parents and teachers I have interviewed tell me they are shut out of local school management and they claim classroom curriculum has just one overriding goal – improving standardized test scores.

Both Black and white progressives, showed uneasiness about Ferrer's campaign. That uneasiness stems from the explosive growth of the Latino population. The 2000 Census reported that 28 percent of the city's population, nearly 2.2 million people, were Hispanic.

Given the unconscious attitudes of racial superiority that persist in white America, it is easy to understand how so many white progressives could succumb to a media narrative that continually denigrates a Latino candidate like Ferrer as bumbling and incompetent.

But then why was such a massive propaganda campaign necessary against an opponent the polls showed had no chance of victory? Could it be that New York's elite and the Bloomberg campaign were more worried about the massive demographic changes and voter discontent than even we realize?

If there was any shame in this race, it belongs to New York progressives, many of whom failed to analyze properly the stakes of the conflict from the start, while others, succumbing to their class and racial biases, failed to rally behind one of the more progressive working-class mayoral candidates in our city's modern history. Hopefully, we will all learn well the lessons of this conflict, because the working class and the new majorities of our cities are inevitably the ones who most suffer when progressive leaders desert the very principles they espouse.



THROW THE BUM OUT: Protesters at Union Square say it's not enough to fight the "Bush onslaught" one issue at a time. PHOTOS: Stanley Rogouski



Hundreds Walkout, Thousands March in Midday Rally to 'Drive Out the Bush Regime'

Throw the Bum Out

BY JED BRANDT

It was the worst week of George Bush's presidency. With top administration officials facing criminal indictments related to the fabrication of "weapons of mass destruction" in Iraq, an opinion poll showed that a majority of Americans support impeachment if Bush lied to go to war. Add to that a humiliating rejection of the free-trade model by tens of thousands in Argentina during Bush's appearance at the Summit of the Americas, and World Can't Wait's call to "bring down the Bush regime" doesn't seem so far-fetched.

Billed as a national day of student walkouts and "no work" in dozens of cities, organizers crafted the mid-day protest to encourage "social disobedience" via the walkouts.

"History turns at certain points. We either go into Bush's future or a future we forge ourselves," World Can't Wait initiator and Revolutionary Communist Youth Brigade spokeswoman Sunsara Taylor told *The Independent*. "Times are not going back to how they were. This is not a time for passivity or 'activism as usual.'"

New York's turnout was among the largest nationwide with upwards of 2,000 marching from Union Square to Times Square. While few took the day off from work, the energy was with the throngs of teenaged students who overcame locked-down schools and aggressive truancy policing to make it downtown.

Student walkouts numbering from dozens to hundreds left Midwood, Roslyn, Saunders, Beacon and Notre Dame high schools. Seventy-five students traveled from Princeton High in New Jersey. Small college contingents came from CCNY, Baruch and Westchester, with a lunchtime surge of NYU students at the Union Square rally.

Union Square has been the center of protest politics in New York City for decades, and Nov. 2 was no different. Outernational, a local radical band, opened the rally, handing the mic off to emcee Sunsara Taylor. State Sen.

Tom Duane gave an impassioned speech recounting the illegalities of the Bush administration. Other speakers included state assemblywoman Deborah Glick, Michael Ratner of the Center for Constitutional Rights and former U.S. diplomat Anne Wright.

Despite a heavy cordon alongside of the crowd, the police were generally hands off. There were two arrests at the start of the march. Bronx anti-police brutality activist Juanita Young was detained without cause. After being taken to the station, she was hospitalized with an asthma attack. Young's son, Malcolm Ferguson was killed by the NYPD in the same Bronx neighborhood as Amadou Diallo.

REDS UNDER THE BED

Noticeably absent from the day were many seasoned protesters. Despite a prominent list of celebrity endorses, many local activists were suspicious of World Can't Wait's close association with the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP).

The RCP is known for its open advocacy of communism and insistence that reform is impossible through electoral means. They also exalt their party's leader Bob Avakian in a way that cuts against the democratic ethos of the U.S. left.

World Can't Wait is open about its origins.

"It will be a kind of 'show and tell' event for the RCP," said Carl Davidson, a leading member of the Chicago chapter of United for Peace and Justice, "...what kind of alliances can they pull together and forces can they pull out pretty much under their core leadership."

Several groups tabled, but the agenda-setting work in the crowd was done by the communists. Anarchists flew a red-and-black flag, but there was no hint of their signature black bloc. And despite a noticeably multi-national crowd, there were no contingents formed by ethnic identity. Liberal Democrats spoke from the stage, but no congressional representatives or ranking leaders attended.

National Highlights

>>>Los Angeles: 800 high-school students walked out, joining with thousands to shut down Wilshire Blvd. One freshman is facing permanent expulsion.

>>>San Francisco: Cindy Sheehan greeted 3-4000 protesters. The San Francisco Chronicle building was hit with a molotov cocktail during an otherwise peaceful day.

>>> Atlanta: 7 high schools walked out, hundreds marched in the heart of the South

>>> Seattle and Chicago saw 2,000 each, with additional protests and actions in 60 other cities.

"It's not cool to just dis the RCP without having our own plans to set off something more concrete," said Max Uhlenbeck, an editor of *Left Turn* magazine. "It's fine to critique liberal anti-war coalitions or sectarian communists but at the end of the day if they are still the only ones out there publicly it means that all of us have really failed to step up to the plate."

Activists associated with the RCP stressed that a full-court press against the Bush faction was necessary far beyond their capacity. They are arguing for engaging the millions outraged at the fascist direction of mainstream politics, constant social resistance and the need for an organization with sharp politics. While not casting insurrection as even close to imminent, they believe that a further, dangerous turn to the right is possible, with Christian fundamentalists and the anti-immigrant Minutemen serving as the foot soldiers of fascism.

"We are not trying to build the 'best fucking movement,' we're trying to make Bush step down," said Taylor. "If you look at history, when people have done profound and extraordinary things, they get out there with their demand, put their bodies on the line and move others to do so as well."

Ragin' Grannies Reproduce

BY ERIN THOMPSON

When Joan Wile began holding vigils in January 2004 under the name of "Grandmothers Against the War" there were only two members of her group. Today, Wile's group boasts over thirty members and is one of the myriad groups that make up the newly-formed and tentatively-named "Granny Brigade for Peace."

The Granny Brigade was called together by Molly Klopot, President of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILFP). Klopot was inspired to form the Brigade after reading news reports about the "Raging Grannies" of Tuscon, AZ. She hopes to create an umbrella coalition of grandmother activists that would blend the efforts of myriad "granny" protest groups active in New York City. The group incorporates women from a range of activist groups, including Code Pink, Grandmothers Against the War, The Gray Panthers and WILFP.

The women of the Granny Brigade exploit their elderly status to underscore the effects of the war in Iraq on the young men and women who fight it. "We're really using grandmother power," said Klopot. In the group's first official action, Klopot and 17 elderly compatriots were arrested on Oct. 17 in front of the Times Square Recruiting Station. The women insisted on being allowed to enlist in the military as part of an anti-war protest. "The cops were very, very sympathetic," said Klopot. "They didn't make the things you put on your wrists really tight. They helped us up the steps. They were very, very genteel with us," she said.

The protest received a level of attention rarely seen for anti-war demonstrations, with articles appearing in The New York Times, Newsday, The Daily News, El Diario, New York Magazine, The New York Post as well as the national and international press.

The Granny Brigade is currently focused on garnering media attention at the Nov. 15 court hearing of those arrested during the protests. Tactics such as pinning pictures of their grandchildren on their chests, wearing identifying kerchiefs or sashes, as well as organizing street theater, singing and chanting, and passing out fake enlistment forms were all proposed at a Nov. 1 organizing meeting.

Although the group has several important agenda items on their plate, such as planning Veteran's Day demonstrations and vigils, they are also attempting to develop a strategy for national involvement. The grannies see setting up a website as instrumental to both deepening involvement on a local New York level, and engendering a nationwide movement. The hope is that the coalition will give birth to an effective, long-term, national anti-war group that engages in high-impact protests. "We're reaching a point where we're going to have to have more acts of civil disobedience," Klopot said.

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Confronting the Torture Professor

In the build-up to the World Can't Wait protests, students at UC Berkeley law school confronted professor John Yoo in the middle of his Oct. 25 lecture. Yoo, author of the Bush administration's legal justifications for torturing prisoners of war, walked out of the class. Activists involved said that "confrontation is necessary to shake people up. We have to take it to them."



PHOTO: WorldCanWait.net

Philly Transit Workers Strike Over Health Care Costs

BY BENNETT BAUMER

Faced with a five percent hike in their health care premiums, angry Philadelphia transportation workers began a strike against the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) on October 31. Transit Workers Union (TWU) Local 234 and United Transportation Union (UTU) Local 1594 had traded pay increases in previous contracts for better health care benefits.

"How will the health care premiums be paid? In previous agreements, the UTU has given up wage increases for improved benefits," said Frank Wilner, a UTU spokesperson.

Local 234 represents about 5,000 subway, bus and trolley operators, and Local 1594 has around 300 workers who run suburban trolleys and buses. With almost half a million Philadelphia area residents using public transportation daily, and one in three households not owning a car, the strike has dramatically disrupted travel. Not known for their support of public transportation, Pennsylvania state legislators have not significantly increased funding for mass transit in years. The Democratic governor dipped into 400 million federal highway dollars for SEPTA use, but it is projected that the highway money will be depleted within a year.

SEPTA claimed that union leaders, "rejected a contract package that would be welcomed by many in the state or region."

Pennsylvania has been troubled by manufacturing job loss in recent years; since the North American Free Trade Act's passage in 1993, the state has lost 27,000 mostly union factory jobs, according to the Economic Policy Institute.

Dirty Kitchen CHINESE WORKERS ORGANIZE

BY BENNETT BAUMER

Low wages, long hours, no health insurance and few ways to better working conditions. Welcome to the New York City food and beverage service industry.

In response to these deplorable conditions, the Restaurant Opportunities Center of New York (ROC-NY), a workers' center, has launched an effort to organize Chinese restaurant workers. Most Chinese restaurant workers are from Fujian province in southeastern China and do not speak English well or have United States government documentation.

"The big challenge is working through fear. Regardless of your status, you're still protected under some labor laws while you are organizing," said Celine Liu of ROC-NY. The center organizes workers geographically, and will educate food service employees on health and safety issues, while advocating for better wages and health insurance.

Restaurants and food service companies employ more than 165,000 workers around the city, and that number is projected to rise 14.6 percent by 2010 according to "Behind the Kitchen Door," a report published by the center. Food service workers earn on average \$19,632 a year, and 13 percent earn less than the minimum wage, while 44 percent live at or below the poverty level.

Worker centers have had some recent successes. Make the Road by Walking, a Flatbush, Brooklyn-based organization, won back wages and paid sick and vacation days at two stores, S & S Farms and Superstar 99. While the Flatbush campaign received direct help from unions, ROC-NY's Chinese restaurant project has organized labor allies but is tied to its "worker center identity."

Walloping Wal-Mart

BY F. TIMOTHY MARTIN

Opposition to Wal-Mart, the world's largest retailer, is escalating as a coalition of the company's detractors prepare to launch a week-long series of grassroots actions nationwide, Nov. 13-19. Led by Wal-Mart Watch, an umbrella group of liberal and progressive organizations founded by Service Employees International Union (SEIU) head Andrew Stern, tens of thousands are expected to take part in organized discussions and protests, held at community centers and churches across the country, as well as outside many of Wal-Mart's 3,600 stores.

Organizers are calling their event Higher Expectations Week, a jab at Wal-Mart founder Sam Walton, who was once quoted as saying, "High expectations are the key to everything." Organizers say they want to step up pressure on Wal-Mart to improve conditions for employees and neighboring communities.

"The goal," said Stern in a recent letter addressed to SEIU members, "is to get the world's largest corporation to address issues such as decent health care benefits, the right for workers to have a voice in their workplace and to address smart-growth issues in our communities."

The highlight of the week: 3,500 house parties featuring screenings of a highly critical new documentary by Robert Greenwald, who previously directed "Outfoxed," a damning examination of political bias at Fox News. Greenwald's newest

film, "Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Prices," is expected to open on Nov. 4 in New York and Los Angeles, and will eventually be shown in at least 19 countries and all 50 states.

Wal-Mart has already responded by slamming the film's trailer, which the retailer says presents at least three inaccuracies. Wal-Mart has countered the recent spate of negative publicity by hiring a new PR firm, and issuing a 10-page press kit for reporters that defends the company's business practices and details their grievances with the film.

A second film, "Why Wal-Mart Works: And Why That Drives Some People Crazy," which takes a more favorable look at the Wal-Mart corporation, is being pushed through editing so it can open around the same time as the Greenwald film. Director Ron Galloway claims his film cost only \$80,000 to make and that he received no funding or support from Wal-Mart.

A press release advertising the film, however, can be found on Wal-Mart's website, along with an open letter from Galloway to Greenwald challenging him to show the two films together.



YOU CAN'T MAKE CARS ON BICYCLE WAGES

BY BENNETT BAUMER

Companies are increasingly using bankruptcy as a way to gut union contracts and lower industry standards. This October, the automotive parts manufacturing company Delphi followed the example of Big Steel and the airlines in filing for Chapter 11 bankruptcy to reduce wage and benefit costs. Delphi wants to slash the United Auto Workers (UAW) wage and benefit package (wage, pension, health insurance, sick and holiday pay) from \$65 an hour to \$16-\$18.

In its restructuring plan, Delphi's corporate leaders intend to cut wages to \$10 an hour, slash company contributions to health care and trim sick and holiday time. Delphi expects to lay off many of its 30,000 union workers through plant closures, and its 12,000 union retirees will see drastic medical cost increases.

"You cannot have an automobile economy on bicycle wages," said UAW President Ron Gettelfinger on his union's website.

Chapter 11 also allows the corporation to pass pension costs onto the Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation, a federal government agency created in 1974 to protect workers' pensions. However, the government caps contributions at 60 percent of the original pension. According to *Labor Notes*, Delphi hired CEO Steve Miller because of his work at Bethlehem Steel when it filed for bankruptcy protection.

While rank and file workers suffer dramatic quality of living decreases, the top 21 company executives and some 500 Delphi managers stand to earn hefty severances and cash bonuses totaling \$87.9 million once Delphi emerges from bankruptcy. Delphi gave Miller a \$3 million signing bonus, plus a \$4 million severance on top of his \$1.5 million salary.

Here's just a few of the 169,000 JOBS CREATED in AUGUST 2005:*



THANKS, GEORGE!

* BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS MONTHLY RELEASE, SEPTEMBER 2005

BLOWING BUBBLES

An Economy Built on Debt

ALAN G. NASSER

Four factors determine economic growth: consumer spending, “capital” investments, government spending and U.S. exports. How has the behavior of these four types of expenditures affected working people?

In terms of exports, there is a net outflow of cash to other countries stemming from a yawning trade deficit of more than \$700 billion annually. Much of this is due to the flight of manufacturing overseas: about one-half of the manufactured goods we buy are produced overseas, mainly in China.

Meanwhile, government spending that puts money in workers’ hands has decreased, and pumped-up military spending is not a net employer of labor.

Spending on capital goods — think computers, construction equipment, machine tools, etc. — has been exceptionally weak since the collapse of the Internet bubble in 2000. Investment in manufacturing tends to create relatively high-wage jobs. The decline of the U.S. manufacturing base, coupled with its more recent loss of its lead in high-tech exports, has led to the slowest rate of growth of domestic investment since the Great Depression.

This leaves consumer spending as the principal engine of economic growth. The rapid rate of growth of consumer spending is associated with a highly troublesome paradox.

The real median wage — the hourly wage of a worker in the middle of the wage scale — has been in slow decline since 1973. But since 2000, the trend has been ominous. Employers’ wage costs are showing the slowest growth rate since these records began in 1981: real wages are down 2.3 percent over the past year.

The paradox is that while savings and income are down, consumption is rising rapidly.

At the same time, workers’ personal savings rate has reached a low of minus 1.1 percent. This is the first negative savings rate since 1947.

The paradox is that while savings and income are down, consumption is rising rapidly. In fact, consumer spending accounted for more than two-thirds of the overall growth rate of 3.8 percent in the economy in the third quarter of 2005.

How is this possible? The manna from heaven has been created by the greatest infusion of credit into the economy in history resulting in the heaviest debt loads ever for U.S. consumers. Since 2000, consumption and debt have been growing faster than both GDP and workers’ income.

In 2001, for the first time ever, the aver-

age American had more overall debt — mainly home and car loans and credit card debt — than she earned in annual disposable income. The average worker’s debt is now equivalent to 116 percent of his disposable income.

Consumers have been able to incur this much debt because of the two major bubbles since the 1990s. Through low interest rates, Alan Greenspan made possible the stock market bubble of 1995-2000. Confident that their wealth was going to rise without end, consumers took on debt that would otherwise have seemed reckless.

After the asset bubble burst in 2000, millions of workers lost a portion of their retirement savings, which they will never recoup.

In its place, Greenspan encouraged the growth of a housing bubble. Consumers have been using their bloated housing “wealth” as collateral for ever more borrowing.

When the housing bubble bursts, working people stand to lose much more. And the shock to the economy as a whole could be much greater, since the housing bubble involves the whole banking system, which the asset bubble did not.

Greenspan argued that it is not the business of the Fed to prevent the growth of bubbles. His successor Ben Bernanke has seconded this commitment to permitting bubbles to run their course. The consequences of this policy could spell an unprecedented disaster for working people.

Greenspan’s Dubious Legacy

BY STEVEN PRESSMAN

In June 1987, President Ronald Reagan named Alan Greenspan to head the Federal Reserve. He was confirmed and took office in August.

That October, the stock market crashed. The Dow fell more than 500 points in one day — its largest point drop in history. Greenspan immediately lowered interest rates and made it clear that he would keep lowering rates to ensure that the market meltdown would not create a depression, as the October 1929 crash had.

Since then, Greenspan has showed his pragmatic side many times. After the Asian financial crisis of 1997, after the 1998 collapse of the hedge fund Long Term Capital Management, and after the Sept. 11 attacks, he vigorously cut interest rates to keep the U.S. economy from collapsing.

However, Greenspan has another pragmatic side, one that has helped Greenspan but not the U.S. economy.

Every four years, the head of the Central Bank must be reappointed. A Federal Reserve head whose main goal is to be reappointed cannot oppose the president too much. This has been all too true of Greenspan. His loyalty has won him a record five terms as chief of the Federal Reserve.

When Reagan and both Bushes wanted to cut taxes, Greenspan testified in Congress that this was a good idea. When President Clinton pushed for raising taxes, Greenspan opposed



JEFF FAERBER

tax cuts. When the current President sought to privatize social security Greenspan supported the proposal.

Greenspan’s support for privatization is especially ironic. In the early 1980s, Reagan appointed Greenspan to the National Commission on Social Security. To “save” Social Security, the Commission recommended, and Congress enacted, higher Social Security taxes and raising the retirement age for collecting benefits.

The main losers under Greenspan have been the American people, who received meager tax cuts — the majority went to the very wealthy — coupled with record budget deficits. Our ability to solve problems stemming from several hurricanes, to improve an education system that is becoming one of the worst in the developed world and to provide healthcare for all Americans would be much easier had we not squandered government revenues by giving the wealthy large tax breaks.

National briefs

HECKUVA JOB, BROWNIE

Newly-released e-mails continue to call into question the job performance of former FEMA head Michael Brown. On the morning Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast, Brown wrote to a colleague: “Can I quit now? Can I come home?” A few days later, he

“...you just need to look more hard-working.”



wrote to an acquaintance: “I’m trapped now, please rescue me.” In other e-mails written during the days leading up to and during the storm, Brown discussed searching for a dog-sitter and mused on his wardrobe. Three days before Katrina made landfall in Louisiana, Brown wrote to his press secretary Sharon Worthy: “Tie or not for tonight? Button-down blue shirt?” Days later, Worthy advised Brown: “Please roll up the sleeves of your shirt, all shirts. Even the president rolled his sleeves to just below the elbow. In this [crisis] and on TV you just need to look more hard-working.”

ROADTRIP FOR RELIEF HEADED TO NEW ORLEANS’ 9TH WARD

From Nov. 20-27, Common Ground, a collective of New Orleans community activists, is hosting a “Road Trip for Relief,” to bring people from across the country to New Orleans to help clean up and rebuild the city’s 9th Ward. The group is estimating that 300 volunteers bearing cleaning supplies and building materials will join the cross-country caravan. See commongroundrelief.org.

HOUSE OF REPS PASSES NON-PROFIT GAG RULE

On Oct. 25, the House of Representatives passed the Affordable Housing Fund Act that will disqualify non-profit organizations applying for money to engage in voter registration, get-out-the-vote, or other non-partisan voter participation activities within 12 months of applying. The bill also bars non-profits that receive the fund from airing public service announcements within 60 days of an election.

CARRANZA TRIAL STARTS

The civil trial of Nicholas Carranza, a former military official in El Salvador alleged to have allowed the torture and murder of thousands to occur in the 1980s during that country’s 12-year civil war, began in a U.S. District Court in Memphis, Tenn., Oct. 31. The civil suit was brought by five Salvadorans who said they suffered the loss of family members under military actions allowed by Carranza. Plaintiff Daniel Alvarado said



Nicholas Carranza

during testimony delivered Nov. 4 that he was kidnapped and tortured for several days.



Assemblyman Ray Haynes

MINUTEMEN AGAIN

Protesters had a tense two-hour standoff with the vigilante group Minutemen Civil Defense Corps Oct. 29 in Sacramento, Calif. The protests were spurred by a ballot measure being introduced in the state legislature by Assemblyman Ray Haynes, that would call for California to form its own police entity to enforce federal immigration laws. Among those in the counter-protest was former independent vice-presidential candidate Peter Camejo. “The Minutemen are saying that these people are criminal, but what they are refugees of poverty,” said Camejo.

In an age of austerity for public schools, CUNY student activists pay the price for exercising their rights.

The Trials of Miguel Malo

BY SARAH STUTEVILLE

On August 15, 2001, Miguel Malo, a student of Hostos Community College in the Bronx, soft-spoken Vice President of the Student Government, and recent immigrant from Ecuador, walked on to his campus holding up a sign protesting budget cuts directed at the college's ESL programs. Two weeks ago, over four years after his one man protest, Malo left a Bronx courtroom in handcuffs, convicted of reckless assault and disorderly conduct. As he was escorted away by two bailiffs, he shouted bail instructions in Spanish over his shoulder to his mother.

"College students are supposed to be trained to be the leaders of this country," said Ronald McGuire, Malo's attorney in a pending civil suit and long-time CUNY (City University of New York) activist, in response to a verdict that has deepened concerns about the future of student activism on CUNY campuses. "They should be taught to question and challenge, not arrested for holding up a sign."

Malo's actions were not unusual within an historical context. Protest and dissent have long been part of the culture of CUNY schools, as its students, often drawn from low-income and minority households in New York City, have fought to keep their education affordable and accessible.

But student activism at CUNY's 18 campuses have been in decline in recent years, despite the fact that many of the schools continue to be threatened by budget cuts, tuition increases and financial aid rollbacks. And the Malo verdict highlights how aggressive policing on CUNY campuses has transformed student life, and protest, over the past decade. No school better illustrates this shift in political culture than Hostos Community College (see sidebar).

"I am convinced there has been a conscious attempt to reverse the political culture on campus," says retired Hostos professor and participant in the "Save Hostos Movement" of the 1970s Gerald Meyer. "There is no place in CUNY that had more political culture than Hostos. Here we are at a time of great influx of Spanish

immigrants in New York, there is no better time for a school that has a bilingual mission, and this is when the serious budget cuts begin?"

Malo, 35, came to the United States nine years ago and soon began attending Hostos, where he could study computer science, develop his English and work toward a degree. Malo, who is a father of two and works full time, has been in and out of school over the past seven years as his schedule and ability to fund his tuition fluctuated, but his commitment to his education has remained constant.

After a year in college, Malo's interest shifted from computers to social work. Through his involvement with the Ecuadorian Club, he became more interested in student politics and was soon elected to the Student Government as Vice President.

"I wanted to learn how the system worked at CUNY," Malo said in Spanish awaiting a jury's verdict at the Bronx Criminal Court on Oct. 24. "I wanted to learn how the system worked in general." Malo was about to get a serious lesson in just that.

In May 2001, student demonstrators, including Malo, forced Hostos President Dolores Fernandez to rescind plans to eliminate two key ESL (English as a Second Language) courses. However, the security concerns raised by on-campus protests would reverberate throughout the summer, and ultimately play a crucial role in the arrest of Malo three months later.

On the day of Malo's arrest, Hostos Security Chief Arnoldo Bernabe was prepared. He had heard rumors that

Viva Hostos!

Named after Puerto Rican political writer and activist Eugenio María de Hostos, the Bronx community college was founded in 1970 in direct response to a broad community movement to make higher education in New York City available to poor, working-class and non-white students. With an emphasis on bilingual education for the city's Spanish-speaking population, Hostos was unique for conducting core requirements in Spanish.

Throughout the 1970s, Hostos students and faculty used a wide range of political action to secure facilities and expand resources for the school. Hostos became a destination for many Spanish-speaking residents and recent immigrants searching for a quality college education.

Photos from the era of the "Save Hostos" movement show throngs of Black and Hispanic students and community members flooding the streets around Hostos campus, yelling into megaphones and holding signs that shout "Viva Hostos!" It is a far cry from the mood of Hostos College today, where every entrance is



guarded by CUNY "peace officers," and CUNY students are denied access to Hostos facilities even with "proper" identification. It was in this climate, the Hostos of the late 1990s, that Miguel Malo became inspired not only to pursue an education, but to get involved in campus politics as well.

—SS

MAKING AN EXAMPLE

What happened next would become the focus of two trials (argued by three lawyers), one civil suit and more than fifty court appearances stretched over the course of four years. According to Bernabe and the testimony of other officers present that day, Malo was asked to leave the registration area as it had not been designated for protest. When he refused, an officer attempted to place him under arrest, but Malo ran from custody into a wall, falling face down on the floor and then flipping over on his back and "kicking and flailing," resulting in hand and groin injuries sustained by two arresting officers.

Student and faculty eyewitnesses have consistently countered that Malo was descended on by a large group of officers who forcefully subdued and arrested him. Malo and his

defenders have also claimed that it was he who sustained injuries from officers who used excessive force and that any harm to officers was a result of their own actions, not Malo's.

THE NEVER-ENDING TRIAL

These discrepancies were not settled easily — or swiftly. Malo's first trial in Dec. 2003 ended in a mistrial, when McGuire (his defense attorney at the time and now representing him in a pending civil suit) declared himself incompetent to defend Malo. His case was then picked up by renowned radical defense attorney Lynne Stewart, but was again put on hold

when Stewart was convicted of aiding terrorism in her work for another client. In the long-delayed second trial, which began this Oct. 17, Malo was defended by Karen Funk who has represented some of the 1,800 defendants arrested in protests against the 2004 Republican National Convention.

Malo, at this point extremely practiced in navigating court appearances, showed up early every day of his trial. Short and stocky, with an easy smile, heavily accented English and a formal shirt and tie, Malo seemed cheerful as he made a point to shake hands and thank any supporters or media that showed up to follow the trial each morning. "I am confident everything will work out okay," he said repeatedly.

The trial opened in a crowded, halogen-lit courtroom in the bottom floor of the Bronx Criminal Court, about ten blocks away from the Hostos campus. Assistant DA Terry Gensler opened by arguing that Malo's was the case of "a man who went too far." Gensler went on to claim that Malo tried to "create chaos, disruption and disorder which resulted in attacking and injuring peace officers."

Funk countered Gensler, stating that Malo was fulfilling his obligation to fellow students by providing them with important information that directly affected their lives. Funk went on to argue that no dis-



Alfrem Caskey

ruption occurred until peace officers decided to arrest Malo, and that the charges against him were greatly exaggerated.

During the week-long trial, student and officer eyewitnesses were called on to testify. Peace officer testimony largely mirrored that of Bernabe's, repeating again a scenario in which Malo fled police custody and thrashed through an arrest during which he intentionally struck officers. All eyewitness not a part of CUNY security maintained that Malo was descended upon by a large group of officers who forcefully restrained and arrested him.

In the end it was a jury's decision: acquitted of intentional assault in the 3rd degree; convicted of reckless assault in the 3rd degree along with disorderly conduct.

"Sometimes I feel there is a mentality in the U.S. that Latin Americans are here to work in the service industry but not to get an education or a real career," Malo had said earlier that morning when asked why he thought the authorities had been so committed to pursuing his case over the past four years. "But I'm confident," he added later, looking up from the bench outside the courtroom door where he was positioned, "that everything will work out okay."

—SS

FREE SPEECH AT CUNY

Malo isn't the only CUNY student who has found himself on the wrong side of the law recently. On Oct. 18, five activists were arrested for a non-violent anti-corporate protest at Hunter. Last March at City College, three students were arrested during a protest of military recruiting on their campus.

"CUNY campuses have always reflected the political culture of the times," says Meyers, "and now is no exception. Everywhere there has been a collapse of enthusiasm and conviction on the left, which has caused people to withdraw support for protest and dissent."

Malo's sentencing has been set for December. The harshest sentence he could receive would be a year in prison, though it would be unusual for a first-time offender to face prison for a class-A misdemeanor. The sentencing judge has already received over 40 letters of support asking that Malo not receive prison time. "At each moment, each time these things happen, I am understanding more about this system," says Malo, drinking coffee at a bright and crowded café across from Hostos the day after the verdict, "and I think there is no justice."

Malo has vowed to appeal the verdict.

first person



Teaching (and Learning) at the City University

By YVONNE LIU

I taught Intro to Sociology last spring at LaGuardia Community College in Long Island City, a school that attracts many immigrant and working-class youth. Ninety percent of the class was ESL, and there was a range of students, from 18- and 19-year-old first-year college students to adult learners returning to school for their Associates degree. It was my first experience teaching at the college level, and it was deeply rewarding.

Since this was intro sociology, I threw in a heady mix at the beginning of Karl Marx, Max Weber and Emile Durkheim. The students loved Marx. They really understood, felt and lived Marx's writings on alienation, how you as a worker in a capitalist society were alienated from your work, the process of working and the end product of your work. They had it down almost to a chant: "Why are people alienated?" "Because they don't own the means of production!" They really felt that sense of general anomie in society and loved the line in C. Wright Mills' piece on the Sociological Imagination that describes individuals as moving in their own private orbits, never touching and never connecting with others. And they cheered when we covered Marx's theory of surplus value and exploitation.

But I remember that in the week after I talked about class stratification with them, a young student who recently moved from Zaire came to visit me during my office hours. First, we chatted about how she was doing in class, and she expressed difficulty in linking the different theorists to their theories. Then, we talked about the content of the day's lecture, reviewing the various positions. She burst out, "What am I supposed to do, because there is so much inequality in society, so much unfairness? What am I supposed to do?"

We hadn't gotten to the part about agency yet, about how we as social actors can change all of these things: class, race, gender, inequality, etc. I tried to link the idea that things like class were socially constructed and can also be dismantled, redefined and recreated. I am not sure if she got what I was trying to say. I basically felt like I was training the class to become activists, leading them to see the underlying basis of the social structures and institutions that we see in society, and take for granted. I taught with my politics in an upfront manner. I felt like I was working against the influence of the other slop that's out there — Fox TV, the *New York Post*, etc.

STILL LOOKING FOR ANSWERS

I decided to not teach this fall at City College, though I was offered a fellowship to do so. I am not ready to be responsible to how my students reflect on what I teach and relate it to the reality of their lives. I don't want to walk in as a relatively privileged graduate student and lecture them about these inequities that affect them in real ways, then sashay out after the hour of class is over without providing clear options or methods to arrive at alternatives. The latter are fuzzy in my own mind.

I want to include a participatory pedagogy in my practice of teaching. It's hard to take the concept of participatory learning and classroom democracy into the university space. You are only with the students three hours a week; you get to know their names and selective information that they share with you in slices of conversation. The relationship is rather minimal, and I felt like I was constantly trying to build trust with them, to gain their respect by giving it. But they were not willing to take on power when I gave it to them.

I did one group exercise with my students, where they were divided into three groups and were supposed to work with their peers. They were miserable. They didn't talk to each other, and would only talk to me when I walked close to them. I am still looking for the middle ground where I am imparting information that I know, while also using a participatory and democratic teaching method.

I think teaching is the most beautiful thing one can do, to bestow a gift of thought, a flicker of an idea in a young person's mind. I still remember the day the student from Zaire looked thoughtful after we had the discussion about structure versus agency. Then she asked me with wide eyes, "What should I do with my life?" I didn't have a ready answer for her that day. I'm not sure if I ever will.

—CHRIS GUNDERSON

CUNY: A HISTORY OF STRUGGLE

1847

Following years of agitation by the Working Men's Party and other working-class organizations, a popular referendum establishes the Free Academy (later changed to City College) to educate "the children of the whole people."

1916

Pacifist City College student Leon Samson disrupts

speech by Major General Leonard Wood calling for universal military training. Samson is expelled from City College.

1934

President Frederick Robinson invites a delegation of students from Italy to official reception at City College, sparking mass anti-fascist demonstrations leading to

arrests and suspensions.

1937

Frederick Douglass Society campaign succeeds and Dr. Max Yergan is hired to teach first Black history course at City College.

1967

Police attack on anti-war demonstration leads to arrest of 40 students,

sparking week-long student strike. Anti-war protests resulting in suspensions become a regular event on CUNY campuses for the next several years.

1969

April 22 takeover of City College South Campus by Black and Puerto Rican students initiates Open Admissions Strike, culmi-

nating in fires being set in buildings across CUNY and an agreement to open the doors of CUNY to all NYC High school graduates.

1975

New York City fiscal crisis leads to proposals to close many CUNY colleges, to restrict admissions and to impose tuition. Student protests including building

occupations and militant street demonstrations defend Hostos, York, John Jay and Medgar Evers against closure.

1976

First majority non-white CUNY freshman class. Tuition imposed after 129 years of free public higher education.

1989

Tuition hikes proposed by Democratic Gov. Mario Cuomo spark student strike and building takeovers at City College on the 20th anniversary of the Open Admissions Strike. Strike spreads across CUNY and ultimately forces Gov. Cuomo to veto his own proposed tuition hikes.

1995

More proposed budget cuts and \$1,000 tuition hike. March 23 rally at City Hall attracts 20,000 mainly Black, Latino and Asian CUNY and high school students who battle police. Tuition hike reduced to \$750.

2003

Student takeover of the office of President Jennifer Raab demanding that she oppose proposed tuition increase and impending war on Iraq.





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BROOKLYN

Medicare



Seniors Seeth at Medifarce

BY RUTH KELTON

The Panthers were restive. They and I had threaded a maze of dark hallways in the bottom of a New York City housing project on a recent October afternoon to find a small meeting room. We crowded into folding chairs, waiting for an expert from an Albany-based senior action organization to explain the labyrinthine ins and outs of the new Part D Medicare brand-name drug program.

The Gray Panthers around me, a mix of old, not-so-old and relatively young, belonged to the activist group founded in the late 1970s for elders with a gripe against unfair treatment of the old. Today's Panthers have broadened that mandate to include all ages.

Right now they were concerned with the danger they saw looming for over-65s, the disabled, people with low incomes and, ultimately, anyone eligible for Medicare. They took issue with much of the Part D program, regarding it as an open invitation to a corporate takeover of Medicare. Comments round the room ranged from "Confusing!" through "Irresponsible" to "Idiotic!"

Part D was created when Congress voted the Medicare Prescription Drug Improvement and Modernization Act of 2003 (MMA) into lumbering life. Ostensibly, it enabled seniors, the disabled and low-income people, to buy prescription drugs cheaply. Actually, it doesn't cover that much, and Part D has essentially turned over what it does cover to private insurers. The insurers will administer the program for a per-member fee paid by Medicare. The options include relatively comprehensive Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs) and "stand-alone" drugs-only plans (large areas of the country are not covered by HMOs).

If this handover to private firms weren't enough to rile a Panther, the MMA makes it absurdly complex to choose a plan, so confusing are the feds' rules and the insurers' hedges and restrictions. There is no uniformity among private plans and an aspiring Part D member has to wade through a morass of rules and lists even to begin to understand what each plan offers and how to enroll.

THE HURDLES AND HAZARDS OF PART D

PENALTIES: Take Alice, a hypothetical Part D candidate. She spends little on drugs, and the \$32 monthly Medicare premium is more than she pays for meds, so she doesn't enroll during the brief sign-up "window" (November 15, 2005 to May 15, 2006). A year later, Alice gets pneumonia and is prescribed a bunch of expensive drugs. Chastened, Alice signs up, only to learn that she has to pay an extra one percent for every month she delayed, and she'll pay that jacked-up premium for as long as she gets Medicare.

IT'S COMMERCIAL INSURERS OR NOTHIN': George, a potential Part D enrollee, doesn't want a big insurance company breathing down his neck, but it turns out the only way he can get Medicare drug coverage is by enlisting in a Medicare Advantage HMO or a stand-alone program, both run by commercial insurers, a group not known for its philanthropic approach to medicine.

BAIT AND SWITCH: Part D enrollees are "locked in" to their plans. Carlos signs up with a Medicare Advantage HMO that promises no fees, no premiums, and no charges above specified percentages for drugs. Two months later his HMO cheerily tells him he'll have to pay more for his prescriptions (drug prices have risen), and incidentally, he'll be charged \$15 for doctor visits and his monthly premium will be \$40. Carlos is stuck — he can't leave the HMO and keep his coverage for the rest of the year. Meanwhile, Elvis,

GAPS IN COVERAGE: Aimee, who has multiple sclerosis, pays the Part D deductible of \$250, then 25 percent of her drug costs up to \$2,250. After that Medicare snaps its purse shut and she has on her own until she's racked up \$5,000 in drugs. That's a \$2,750 gap for which she's wholly responsible. Granted, Medicare covers all amounts above \$5,000 generously. Still, Aimee lives on a limited income, and wonders where the \$2,750 will come from.

WRITTEN TO CONFUSE: The framing of the MMA makes it so difficult to follow, its instructions so complicated, that even experts disagree about it. No wonder, Elvis, Aimee, et al. are dazed and worried.

There are dim rays of light. Help is available for low-income clients, but the basic \$600 break offered them won't go far with expensive drugs needed for chronic illnesses. Additional help is available for low- and moderate-income people (see box), but it takes some searching among myriad services, government agencies and private organizations.

Just who stands to gain? The insurance companies, for one. My HMO — pretty typical — received \$72 a month this year from Medicare just for keeping me on its books. Next year they'll get \$88, plus whatever they and Medicare agree on for Part D. That multiplied by, say, 3,000 members comes to a nice piece of change.

Who else wins? The pharmaceutical companies. With no government cap on drug prices, they will likely show enormous profits next year, at least in part because of an increase in Part D customers.

"Just thinking about it makes me physically ill," says lobbyist Lani Sanjek of the New York State Wide Senior Action Council, the speaker at the Panther meeting.

How did a plan touted as a boon to the old, the poor and the disabled morph into a hand-out to the insurance and pharmaceutical industries? Sanjek thought she knew:

"MMA was framed by insurance companies, pharmaceutical companies and conservatives, all of whom either had representatives, or sat, as industry-connected legislators, on the committee. These people wrote the bill. It was designed to hand over more of Medicare to private interests."

Sanjek, who lobbied in Washington against MMA, also claims its complexity was intentional. Conservatives believed that it would discourage potential enrollees from supporting future social legislation.

It was no surprise, then, to find the Gray Panthers stunned and furious. Joan Davis, a Panther NGO representative to the United Nations, put it succinctly: "Part D is convoluted, ill conceived and inefficient... We want the corporations OUT of the government."

Just who stands to gain? The insurance companies, for one.

already an HMO member, is given an arm-lock ultimatum: "Get Part D through us or lose all your coverage for the rest of the year!"

NO PRICE CAPS: The pharmaceutical industry, even more than insurers, can raise its prices as much as it likes, whenever it likes. This means that Alice, Carlos, and an army of Medicare enrollees are completely unprotected from sudden drug price jumps.

NO PRIVACY: The feds can also waive some privacy protections (just which ones is still not clear). Marsha, who has Hepatitis C (and spends a bundle on drugs) is not enthusiastic about sharing her medical history with big insurance, but she needs the meds.

More information about Part D

THE MEDICARE ASSISTANCE LINE
(1-800-MEDICARE / 1-800-633-4227)
you may be referred to local help lines.

AARP: 212-207-3717

GRAY PANTHERS: 212-799-7572
www.geocities.com/graypanthersny
NATIONAL OFFICE: 1-800-280-5362.



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France: Burning All Illusions

BY DANIELLE FOLLETT AND A.K. GUPTA

The death on Oct. 27 of two youth who were fleeing random police checks in a Paris suburb has sparked weeks of chaos that has sent the nation's political ideals up in smoke.

Bouna Traore and Ziad Benna were electrocuted in the suburb of Clichy-sous-Bois when they jumped the fence of an electrical substation while evading police. Their deaths ignited unrest among disenfranchised youth of their poor neighborhood.

By the third day of rioting, concerted efforts by Clichy's mayor and local imams seemed to have restored peace. That Sunday, however, the police moved to occupy and "lock down" the town, provoking residents with insults and ultimately tear gassing a mosque during prayer time, according to witnesses.

Compounding the anger, the police first denied responsibility for the gassing then refused to apologize, resulting in rioting that spread to more than 300 towns and cities throughout France.

The tough police actions are being encouraged by the media-conscious Interior Minister, Nicholas Sarkozy, who is hoping that playing the strong man in a theater of civil unrest will win him votes in the 2007 presidential election. His inflammatory comments have stoked widespread anger, starting on June 23 when he vowed to "clean up" an immigrant neighborhood "with an industrial power-hose."

Then on Oct. 19, Sarkozy declared a "war without mercy" on violence in the suburbs (where immigrant-based communities tend to be concentrated). On Oct. 25, after being pelted with stones and bottles during a visit to the Paris suburb of Argenteuil, Sarkozy described the youth as "rabble."

Many blamed Sarkozy for the unrest. The newspaper *L'Humanité* editorialized that Sarkozy "deliberately lit the fuse," while a leader of a police union lambasted him for getting



BBC.CO.UK

"young people all excited and then [going] home to bed."

Others argued the unrest was rooted in decades of government policy that called into question the "republican model of integration" that seeks to erase particularities of culture and religion.

For France's immigrants and their descendants, one critic observed, the Enlightenment ideals of "liberté, égalité, fraternité" have been replaced by the reality of "repression, discrimination, segregation."

This reality is found in the northeastern suburbs around Paris, which suffer from an unemployment rate nearing 40 percent, declining social services and a repressive police presence.

Most of the inhabitants are second- or third-generation "immigrants" (as they are still called in French), the descendants of workers from French colonies who were brought in after World War Two to provide cheap labor for reconstruction. (Many also fought for France during the war.)

These immigrants survived in conditions of poverty and discrimination, but the booming post-war economy provided them with steady work. Since the economic downturn of the late 1970s, these families have been the first to lose their jobs, and their children and grandchildren are born into a world of segregation, discrimination, and harassment.

These grievances are cited by many youth in the suburbs. When asked about jobs, one told the *Observer*, "There are a few at the airport or at the Citroën plant, but it's not even worth trying if your name is Mohamed or Abdelaoui."

Another told *AFP*, "There is nothing here. Nothing. We live four to a room. Our parents go to work every day like zombies."

Police abuse is a common grievance. "The police know us all by name," said one youth. "But when they come here they still beat down the door and order our parents to lie on the ground. And when they ask where we are from, we answer from here of course, but they say: 'No you're not. You're from Africa.'"

The sentiments were backed up by a recent French commission report that criticized the lack of training among police and their "generalized impunity" when dealing with youth in immigrant neighborhoods.

Another obstacle is discrimination in housing, leading to deadly results. A government study found that nearly 30 percent of immigrant applications for subsidized apartments had been pending for more than three years in 2000, twice the national average. In Paris, which has an estimated 200,000 homeless, a series of fires in substandard buildings killed 48 immigrants earlier this year.

"Actions like these are the only way we can be heard," said a young woman from the poor suburbs on TV. For many in the middle class these events mark their first awareness of the degree of poverty in their country. Another teen said, "This is a new 1968, not in the universities, but in the projects." And another: "We want jobs and we want respect."

Instead, the government has resorted to a heavy hand. It imposed "fast-track trials," sentencing in a few days almost 150 youth and adults to detention facilities in trials that lasted minutes. And on Nov. 8 it invoked a 1955 law used during the Algerian War to put in place a 12-day state of emergency.

Le Monde blasted the move as "[sending] to the youth of the suburbs a message of astonishing brutality: that after 50 years France intends to treat them exactly as it did their grandparents."

matter of Iran's nuclear program to the U.N. Security Council for the possible adoption of sanctions. In the council, it is expected that China or Russia would veto the imposition of sanctions.

Thereupon, John R. Bolton, the United States chief delegate, would assert that the United States would undertake the responsibilities that the council was failing to carry out.

"That's the reason — and the only reason — Bolton is at the U.N.," the source said.

I do not know if the report is true, correct, accurate, though the source is a good one. However, I felt that I would be negligent in my journalistic duty if I did not record it, if I simply decided to forget about it.

It is important to recognize that such an attack might not come about for a year, a year-and-a-half — the Bush administration has more than three years to run, plenty of time for a propaganda build-up to it.



ARGENTINA.INDYMEDIA.ORG

BY ANA PEREZ

On one of my recent trips to Latin America, I saw a child no older than five years old standing at a busy intersection, begging drivers for money. He was barefoot and his skin and clothes were covered with a thick layer of black soot. This child had managed to learn how to navigate the heavy traffic and aggressive drivers and had developed strategies for survival. For him and for the other 220 million people who live in poverty in Latin America, every moment is a constant reminder of why Bush's economic policies are not working.

Bush's 70 percent disapproval ratings in Latin America do not come as a surprise to people who live there. Last week, before

Bush's arrival, Argentineans were predicting that thousands would hit the streets in protest; some even warned him not to come. Yet Bush and his advisors are clueless about the sentiments of those who disagree with them. And this is perhaps Bush's worst mistake. With a little research, Bush's advisors should have known that Argentina of all countries would be the last place the Bush should visit after the worse week of his presidency.

Argentineans know better than any other South Americans that Bush-style economic development with open markets, deregulation and privatization only leads to increased poverty. After following the recipe of the free market, Argentina suffered one of the worst economic and political crises in the Americas in 2001 and 2002.

Most Latin Americans know that this summit is not about "creating jobs and strengthening democracy" as the title of the summit claims, but about push-

ing unfair trade deals that undermine the rights of workers in Latin American countries and destroy the environment.

But President Bush obviously did not read the early signs of disapproval of his actions like the stalled FTAA (Free Trade Area of the Americas) talks, and the development of MERCOSUR, an effort by Brazil, Venezuela, Argentina and Cuba to develop an alternative to the FTAA.

Now Bush is being forced to face the music and chanting of tens of thousands of people who are coming from across Argentina and Latin America to protest against him. In fact, in Latin America he is being crowned the most unpopular U.S. president in history. It is time for the Bush administration and for U.S. citizens to open our eyes to the misery the poor in our nation and around the world are suffering. We can't continue to claim disbelief at the levels of poverty in New Orleans or at the failure of free trade in Latin America.

Ana Perez is the Cuba program director at Global Exchange. This article originally appeared on commondreams.org.



On the march in Argentina. PHOTO: argentina.indymedia.org

Target: Iran

BY DONALD PANETH

UNITED NATIONS, N.Y. — Attempting to understand what is going on in a situation — the catastrophe in the Middle East, for example — it is helpful to put together a narrative of events and the different aspects contributing to it.

On Oct. 19, 2005, I was startled to hear a well-placed source declare at the United Nations that the Pentagon has prepared plans to attack Iran, that the attack will take the form of an airstrike, and that its objective will be "regime change."

Timing will be an important factor, the source said. It will follow a vote by the International Atomic Energy Agency to refer the

Latin Am. Workers Reclaim
Factories, Plan Next Move

BEYOND
CAPITALISM

By JORGE MARTIN

CARACAS, Venezuela—More than 400 people from 235 worker-occupied factories and 20 different national trade union centers met to discuss their problems, share their experiences and negotiate business plans that benefit workers instead of factory owners at the First Latin American Gathering of Worker-Recovered Factories Oct. 27-29.

In the opening rally, which drew a crowd of 3,000, President Hugo Chavez said it was capitalism that closed down factories and that these factories “must be recovered by the workers.” He compared the struggle of the occupied factories movement to the struggle for independence from Spanish rule in the 19th century and underlined the “potential of the workers in our continent to break their chains and leave capitalism behind.”

The factory takeover movement has its origins in resistance to economic austerity programs administered by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund that have left millions of people jobless. Starting in 2001, workers in Argentina and other Latin American countries began occupying and expropriating closed factories. Since then, they have fought off attacks and threats of eviction in order to reopen the factories, to get them up and running again, and to create a new model of cooperative production.

As part of the meeting, representatives from different worker-managed companies gathered to discuss and reach mutually beneficial agreements. They insisted, however, that these were not merely commercial agreements, but rather that they were based on different principles of mutual cooperation.

One such agreement was between Venezuela and the Cipla-Interfibra-Flasko-Flaskepet group of worker-managed companies in Brazil. The Venezuelan state-owned petrochemical company Pequiven will sell raw materials to Cipla at preferential prices and Venezuela’s state-owned oil company PDVSA will buy finished pipes from Cipla. But at the same time, the workers at Cipla-Interfibra will provide the technology and the know-how for Venezuela to set up a number of factories making frames for windows, doors and other construction materials. All this will allow Venezuela to bypass the domination of the market for these types of plastic products by a handful of U.S. multinationals.

This arrangement is significant in that it allows the Venezuelan government to give direct assistance to a group of factories in Brazil that have been occupied and managed by workers and have been threatened on a number of occasions with eviction and jail by the Brazilian judiciary.

After three days of hard work and discussions, 500 workers, trade union representatives and Venezuelan government officials gathered for the closing session. The culmination of the conference was a statement that the workers from worker-managed companies passed defending their right to occupy factories.

“The capitalists, the financial speculators and the multinationals are to blame for the bankruptcy of the companies,” said the statement. “Every factory closed is a graveyard of jobs.”

A longer version of this article appeared on marxist.com.

Afghanistan



(Counterclockwise from top) 1. On the outskirts of Kabul, mud brick homes enclosed by mud brick walls are the norm. Here a man pushes his bike along a village road, in the Dehsabs district. 2. A Special Forces soldier stationed near the border with Pakistan. The number of U.S. troops in Afghanistan has increased to 18,000 as a growing insurgency takes root in the southeast of the country. 3. Observers watch as ballots from the Sept. 18 parliamentary elections are tabulated in a village of canvas tents that served as vote-counting centers. 4. A burka-clad woman waits in a mini-van for a ride back to the capital city of Kabul after attending a voter-education class for women held at a high school outside the city. 5. Farzina Samimes prepares to record the second episode of a women’s television show that began airing in September. “We are doing it just for the women,” she said. “We are not scared.”

A Guest in Kabul

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY ANTRIM CASKEY

My decision to go to Afghanistan to cover the September parliamentary elections turned out to be the most difficult part of my one-month journey. I have never met a people like the Afghan people. If you are a guest in Afghanistan, the Afghans will do everything they can to help you. This is no exaggeration. But the tone of their generosity is not servile or fawning. It’s a responsibility – a matter of honor, pride and respect – three outstanding characteristics of Afghan people.

As for the U.S. presence in Afghanistan, most Afghans want the Americans to stay, until they are not needed, as is the case with President Hamid Karzai’s security detail: Dyncorp is out and the Afghans they’ve trained are in. It is a pragmatic desire – without the sense of stability that the coalition forces provide, many Afghans fear the country will return to war – after almost 30 years of conflict, Afghans want peace, they want the basic amenities of daily life that we take for granted: paved roads, electricity and running water.

The sense of stability and return to normality in Afghanistan now is incredibly fragile, it could boil over or collapse like a house of cards at any moment.





DAVID HOLLENBACH

Syria: The Next Iraq

BY ROBERT DREYFUSS

Three years ago, the U.S. invasion of Iraq was widely viewed as the first chapter of a region-wide strategy to remake the entire map of the Middle East. Following Iraq, Syria and Iran would be the next targets, after which the oil-rich states of the Arabian Gulf, including Saudi Arabia, would follow.

It was a policy driven by neoconservatives in and outside of the Bush administration, and they didn't exactly make an effort to keep it secret. In April, 2003, in an article in *The American Prospect* titled "Just the Beginning," I wrote:

"Those who think that U.S. armed forces can complete a tidy war in Iraq, without the battle spreading beyond Iraq's borders, are likely to be mistaken." And the article quoted various neocon strategists to that effect:

"I think we're going to be obliged to fight a regional war, whether we want to or not," said Michael Ledeen, a former U.S. national security official and a key strategist among the ascendant flock of neoconservative hawks, many of whom have taken up perches inside the U.S. government. Asserting that the war against Iraq can't be contained, Ledeen said that the very logic of the global war on terrorism will drive the United States to confront an expanding network of enemies in the region. "As soon as we land in Iraq, we're going to face the whole terrorist network," he said, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), Hezbollah, Hamas, Islamic Jihad and a collection of militant splinter groups backed by nations — Iran, Syria and Saudi Arabia — that he calls "the terror masters." "It may turn out to be a war to remake the world," said Ledeen. "In the Middle East, impending 'regime change' in Iraq is just the first step in a

wholesale reordering of the entire region."

As the war in Iraq bogged down, and as a public outcry developed in the United States against the neo-conservatives over the apparently bungled war, another sort of conventional wisdom began to take flight. According to this theory, the United States no longer had the stomach — or the capability — to spread the war beyond Iraq, as originally intended. Our troops are stretched too thin, our allies are reining us in and cooler heads are prevailing in Washington — or so the theory goes.

A RECKLESS STRATEGY

But the news from Syria shows that the conventional wisdom is wrong. The United States is indeed pursuing a hard-edged regime change strategy for Syria. It's happening right before your eyes. With the ever-complacent U.S. media itself bogged down in Iraq, and with the supine U.S. Congress unwilling to challenge our foreign policy apparatus, Syria is under the gun. As in Iraq, the United States is aggressively pursuing a regime change there without the slightest notion of what might come next or who might replace President Bashar Assad. Might it be the fanatical Muslim Brotherhood, by far the most powerful single force in largely Sunni Syria? Might the country fragment into pieces, as Iraq is now doing? The Bush administration doesn't know, just as they didn't know what might happen to Iraq in 2003. But they are going ahead anyway.

It isn't just the repercussions of the U.N.-led investigation into the assassination of former Lebanon Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, whose murder may or may not have been arranged by Syria's intelligence service. Since 2003, the United States has sought political and economic sanctions against Syria (long before Hariri was killed); sought to isolate Syria diplomatically; singled out Syria for its support for Sunni insurgents inside Iraq; issued a series of ominous threats against the Syrian regime ("our patience is running out with Syria," warned

Zalmay Khalilzad, the U.S. consul in Iraq); and, according to an October 15 *New York Times* article, begun threatening "hot-pursuit" and other cross-border military action against Syria. That *Times* piece noted, in part:

"A series of clashes in the last year between American and Syrian troops, including a prolonged fire-fight this summer that killed several Syrians, has raised the prospect that cross-border military operations may become a dangerous new front in the Iraq war, according to current and former military and government officials."

There is even a Syrian version of Iraq's charlatan Ahmad Chalabi, and there are rumors that Kurdish rebels in Syria northeast, along the Iraqi border, are getting support from Iraqi Kurds who are part of the current interim government in Baghdad.

Various U.S. Syria analysts who have not swallowed the neoconservative Kool-Aid argue that the United States is pursuing Regime Change II in Syria. Among them is Flynt Leverett, a former CIA analyst now at the Brookings Institute, who suggests that Assad is moving slowly in the direction of political and economic reform — and might want our help. Others, including several former U.S. ambassadors, tell me that Syria can be a key partner in quieting down the crisis in Iraq, but U.S. belligerence is driving Syria in the other direction. And Scott Ritter and Sy Hersh, speaking in New York recently, noted that Syria (and its spy services) has been an important behind-the-scenes partner in attacking Al Qaeda since 2001. But "So what?" argue the neoconservatives. It's regime-change time, and they won't let rational arguments get in their way.

*A longer version of this article originally appeared on tompaine.com. Robert Dreyfuss (robertdreyfuss.com) is a freelance writer based in Alexandria, Va., who specializes in politics and national security issues. His latest book is *Devil's Game: How the U.S. Helped Unleash Fundamental Islam*.*

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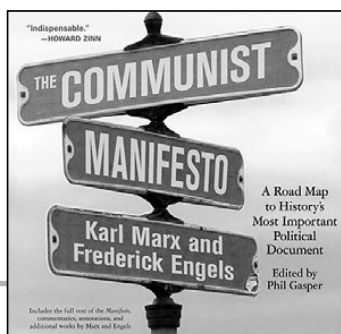
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BY AMY WOLF



DAVID HOLLENBACH

Alex, 26, cut her teeth as a psychologist at the only maximum-security program in the country that deals primarily with sex offenders convicted of rape, incest and pedophilia. The Assessment and Program Preparation Unit at Clinton Correctional Facility (APPU), houses prisoners who face an unquestionable threat from the prison's general population.

On the inside, these men are referred to as "baby rapers" or "rapos," and would be subject to rape and murder under the honor code upheld by inmates outside the isolated unit. After a year at Clinton, Alex helped establish a treatment program for released sex offenders and continues to work in the field.

Alex: The head of my department tried to get me thrown out of school, but when he couldn't he sent me to prison. I had the choice to work at Clinton to finish my degree, or drop out. When the prison agreed to take me, they didn't know I was a woman. I worked there for a year, after which my supervisor said, "I love you like a granddaughter, and if you don't get out of hear your going to end up dead." So, I left.

It was my first couple of months there, and during a big snowstorm, the prisoners had dug out a snow cave in the yard. When I walked out there, I saw three of the inmates, sodomizing each other in a row. Actually that was the first time I had seen a penis in my life.

AW: Were you trained to deal with rapists?

ALEX: Absolutely not. The school that I finished up at was very Adlerian in nature, which is a how-can-I-help-you, let-me-hold-your-hand kind of psychology, which in no way prepared me.

When you work in a prison, you can't think of the man sitting in front of you as a person, you have to think of him as an inmate. The minute that I started to think about one of them as a person I would lean closer, make eye contact, use sympathetic body language — all the stuff that will get you sucked in until you let your defenses down, and the next thing you know you're dead. Somebody tries to shank you, somebody tries to rape you,

which nearly happened to me several times, because I was not prepared. I did not have the training I needed.

Were the sex offenders abused as children?

I have been working with sex offenders for three-and-a-half years now, and I could count the number of sex offenders on both hands who were NOT abused. But what I tell these men, is that may explain it, but it doesn't excuse it. I asked one client, "You know what it feels like to

"You know what it feels like to be sodomized by a family member, so knowing that, why would you go and do that to your nephew?"

be sodomized by a family member, so knowing that, why would you go and do that to your nephew?"

How did he answer?

He looked at me and he didn't know why.

Do any of them know why they do it?

The sadists do. I had a guy who said to me "I do it because I know she's bleeding and screaming and crying and that's what gets me off." But the majority of the crimes that I have seen are not done by sadists.

Is it against the law to show pornography to minors?

Yes, it's a sex offense. Its part of grooming — the things the sex offenders will do to earn your trust and get you interested in sex.

How do you help the sex offenders not offend again?

We sit down with sex offenders and figure out what their cycle of sex abuse is. What are their pretends-to-be-normal behaviors? What are their triggers? What are their coping or covering up mechanisms which lead to the acting out phase? After raping or molesting, what do they tell themselves to feel normal again?

And what do they tell themselves to make it OK?

Helping the Hated

A CONVERSATION WITH ALEX, PSYCHOLOGIST TO SEX OFFENDERS

"I was teaching her." "Oh no, the three-year-old grabbed my head and put it in her crotch. She wanted it." "It was only one time, it will never happen again." "If no one knows, its no big deal."

How did these experiences impact your own sexuality?

I was very sexually inexperienced. I was a virgin... by the time I hit the prisons, I was just starting to get more open with my sexuality. But after day two of being there, I shut down completely. I still consider myself recovering from what happened to me in prison.

This is personal, but I don't mind sharing it with you. I have been bombarded with perversion, deviant porn, snuff and bestiality. And I was pretty bread-and-butter heterosexual in my thoughts up until then. After being exposed to this type of pornography, my sexual arousal to what normally would work very well for me didn't work anymore. And I never really bought into that before, that you could be conditioned into what you could

victim's pain worth more than another's?

Do you feel that the vilification of sex offenders in society impedes their ability to assimilate? Does stigmatizing them for the rest of their lives keep them in that mindset?

I think that goes two ways. The stigmatization fuels their hate and frustration and feeling like victims of society. Or they take it and don't like it, but feel guilty enough that they deserve it. They never like it... trust me.

Does it inhibit their re-entry? Yes, I think it really does, but these laws are not for the sex offenders. They are meant to protect the victims and the potential victims.

Communities across the country do not allow sex offenders to answer the door to trick-or-treaters on Halloween, despite the fact that most sex offenses happen to victims that know the perpetrator. Do you support such measures? Yes, because I know some men who would see little Johnny dressed up like a

pirate and that's going to trigger his urge to want to offend somebody. I would rather have him not open the door, than stalk little Johnny or offend his own son that's sleeping upstairs.

How would you change the criminal justice system?

I would say that anyone who is found guilty of a sex crime does state time, not county time, not probation — state time. For some of these guys 30 days in the big house will break them. If they're in for three years, they're going to think twice before they touch another little girl, cause they might be looking at six years next time. For one thing, there's the fear of being raped and killed in prison. Many prison officials won't care, one less "rapo" for them to worry about.

Psychological treatment should be mandatory and paid for. Right now, it's left to the prisoner to find treatment after they're released. The people who need it most are the people who are the most resistant to getting it. I don't really worry about the guy who is coming in early for his appointment, as much as the guy who has cancelled six or seven times. What's he cookin' up? That's what scares me the most.

For more of this interview, visit nyc.indymedia.org

Arab-American Acts

Acts for Palestine: Four 1-Act Plays
Blue Heron Arts Center

The astonishing thing about *Acts for Palestine*, four one-acts by Palestinian-Americans, is the hidden-treasure phenomenon. How many Americans outside of the Arab-American community know there are Arab-American theater groups, etc., that “bring together world-class artists to tell timely, provocative stories that reflect a growing global community”? The Kazbah Project and Nibras Arab American Theater Collective produced this two-evening offering in October to benefit a spring 2006 New York City exhibition showcasing 50 Palestinian artists, organized by Al-Jisser Group.

On an essentially bare stage at the Blue Heron Arts Center, four writers and directors and eight actors did a polished job of conveying the paradoxes and torments of the Arab-American experience, and often in hysterically funny terms. Living bourgeois American lives, asked by older relatives with “annoying” accents whether they are “doing hanky-panky,” they are more concerned with the wildly ironic contrasts of their own lives. In *Pressing Beyond in Between*, playwright and performer Soha Al-Jurf witnesses the sexual humiliation of her mother on a trip to Palestine. This, combined with terrible images on American TV, prompts a youthful decision to devote herself to liberating her people. But, yes, she is doing hanky-panky.

The similarly autobiographical *Palestine* was written and portrayed by Najia Said, daughter of Edward Said, who was educated in New York City private schools and was often mistaken for a Jew. When she would insist she was an Arab, people would say, “Oh, you’re Sephardic!” She describes her sense of guilt and impotence when she would see non-Arab girls carrying “Free Palestine” protest signs. During her obligatory trip “home” before starting college, she manages to insult her hosts by refusing food and wearing short skirts. For her, the “Promised Land” is a frightening place.

In the two-character *Between Our Lips* by Nathalie Handal, a woman who has been arrested for murder is visited by a journalist-advocate who was her true love. She married a friend of theirs, recently killed trying to save a girl who innocently walked into the line of Israeli fire.

Macklubeh by Sami Metwasi touches on serious subject matter with broad humor. An old woman is visited by an angel who announces that death is coming for her that day. But the woman,



The Museum of Now

BY NICHOLAS POWERS

I stare at a slave who’s been dead a hundred and fifty years. Posters for the exhibit “Slavery in New York” show an old, snow-haired Black man. He was the last slave freed in New York in 1851 and his eyes, hardened by the fear of death and the fatigue of life, ask “What did you do with your freedom?”

I ride the subway to Central Park West to see the exhibit. It’s a neighborhood where money layered on money has built invisible walls not found on maps but New Yorkers know by instinct. Usually, I come here from a noisier and more dangerous home to relax within these walls, to feel security I can’t afford, to breathe the quiet air of liberal passivity.

Today I measure the distance between me and the old man in the poster, between the life he endured and my unknown fate. The exhibit at the New York Historical Society opened October 7 and closes March 5 but the history it raises could change what New York becomes. It will show the non-white majority that New York was built on slavery and grudgingly abolished it.

Exhibit sponsors JPMorgan Chase, Con Edison and Goldman Sachs want to be part of this history, if only to conceal the benefits they derived from it. In 2004 a reparations attorney

found JPMorgan’s fortune was built selling insurance to slave traders. In 2001 protestors accused Con Edison of environmental racism for trying to bury toxic waste under Yucca Mountain. In 1998 a magazine exposed the lucrative investments Goldman Sachs have made in prison labor.

The \$5 million exhibit is a down payment on the past. If they acknowledge crimes of centuries ago, they won’t owe anyone victimized by their wealth today. So a multimedia exhibit was set up to shine a light into the past. On the floor projected letters swirled as if caught in the ocean tides one heard from above; then linked into a quote from a slave or slave owner. The tearing apart of language signals the centuries long silence to come.

The soundtrack of slavery, rhythmic moaning and iron smacking iron, continued as a video lit the faces of the audience. It explained how New York was the center of the slave trade that brought about the Industrial Revolution. I saw an older Black couple quiet and still as if studying evidence while elderly white women chatted nervously.

Critics said the show could ignite racial tensions. They were right. I hovered around the white women, listening for a racist remark to justify an anger that may be older than any his-

tory. They noticed me and began praising Blacks, the only thing I was left with was the way they said “Blacks” like “blah-aks” as if spitting bitter taste out.

The history of the exhibit was grand but it was the small details that stuck. On the wall was a slave code; one rule stated no slave walks at night without a lantern. Next was a video installation shaped like a well and from its bottom you watched four Black women braid their voices together while dipping a bucket.

The exhibit succeeds in showing the ideology of slavery by anchoring it with artifacts. One display had two rooms, a slave cabin and the master’s house. The former filled with cheap wood utensils and burlap clothing and the latter with shiny tools and leather-bound toilet. “Slavery in New York” delivered history but not, as it likes to advertise, why it matters. It stopped at showing us how each generation since has tried to unravel the knot of oppression and yet inevitably becomes bound again.

I rode the subway to Bed-Stuy, came out and looked down the street. If we could see beyond our time and from that place look back, what would the exhibit “Race in New York” display? After the boroughs are gentrified will Marcy Projects become a museum? If so, it would hire Black actors to stalk visitors demanding spare change, less for money than proof they’re not invisible. Visitors would hear in Hip Hop rage pounded into submission with hard beats. They’d see gold teeth and know how desperate we were to be valued. They’d see girls standing on corners through the night, waiting for men to buy them. They’d enjoy a video installation looking up from the cup of a homeless man talking survival with friends. They’d be reminded of neighborhoods they don’t go to, where people live beyond invisible walls.

A Black man stumbles up to me, “Boss? You got change?” he asks. I shake my head but look him in the eye while lying. I get home and take off my coat. In the bathroom I stand in front of the mirror and feel the immensity of time, the certainty that generations will be born after I’m gone and look back on me and judge. I realize that in the mirror is a man who’s been dead since he was born, dead because he hasn’t done anything with his freedom.

played with roguish tail-twitching, isn’t ready. She wants a lover. A young man, fleeing from Israeli soldiers, bursts in on her, as does another man with whom she flirts before he declares he’s her son. The dialogue cleverly and raucously conveys their dire circumstances. The erotic crone finally arrives in the afterlife – along with the young Palestinian who was killed. But he grinningly announces that he has taken someone with him as he puts his arm around an IDF (Israeli Defense Forces) soldier.

Minor cavils: While the direction made good use of the stage, was appropriately paced and clearly conveyed the dynamic of each piece, the rhythm of *Macklubeh* slacked off at the end and it wasn’t immediately clear that the amiable-looking fellow in the khakis was IDF. Also, the voice of the male actor in *Between Our Lips* didn’t carry sufficiently. Otherwise: Bravo.

—DIANE MASON

Red Iraq

At its best, the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP) has resisted colonial rule, fought Saddam Hussein and directed strikes under the gun of U.S. occupation. At its worst, the party has made disastrous alliances with reactionary Baathists and failed to mobilize during the revolt against Hussein, post-Gulf War I.

In *A People’s History of Iraq*, Ilario Salucci offers a brief history of the Iraqi Communist Party. One of the ICP’s low points occurred in the mid-seventies

when the party backed the Baathists’ war against the Kurds, which helped pave the way for Hussein. The result – the Communists lost control of the unions and Hussein initiated a crackdown on the reds. With his

A People’s History of Iraq: The Iraqi Communist Party, Workers’ Movements, and the Left 1924–2004
By Ilario Salucci
Haymarket Books

anti-Communist credentials established, Hussein got U.S. military equipment and support to invade Iran in the hope of defeating the Khomeini-led Islamic revolution.

Pushed into Kurdistan and into exile outside of the country, the ICP was left to lick its wounds. The party missed another chance when Iraqis revolted against the dictator after Hussein’s disastrous invasion of Kuwait ended in defeat by U.S. forces in March 1991.

Salucci points out that the Bush Sr. administration supported Hussein’s crushing of the internal insurrection, but does not cite any of the available evidence revealing how the White House preferred a defanged dictator to an unending occupation or a Shiite-majority government (harbingers of the present). Salucci does note that the sanctions later strengthened Hussein by impoverishing most

Iraqis and making them dependent on his tightly controlled food-rationing system.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Communists regained momentum by denouncing the U.S.-imposed sanctions that led to the deaths of 500,000 Iraqi children, as estimated by UNICEF. When Bush Jr. invaded Iraq in 2003, the ICP decided to take part in the U.S. occupation government, though its union offices were raided and strikes broken.

Currently, the ICP has competition from the Worker Communist Party of Iraq, which directs its anger at reactionary Islamic militias as much as at the U.S. occupation. Both communist groups call for a withdrawal of U.S. troops and lead strikes and union organizing campaigns. Many international leftists have been critical of the ICP, even calling its members collaborators. Salucci gives a nuanced view of a party that, despite decades of brutal repression, keeps on coming back.

—BENNETT BAUMER



500 YEARS OF STRUGGLE, 25 YEARS OF CISPES: A mural painted by CISPES (Comm. in Solidarity with El Salvador) in Austin, TX, celebrating 5 centuries of resistance by the people of El Salvador. CISPES will celebrate its 25th anniversary here in New York with a party and dance. *See calendar – Saturday, Dec. 3.*

THE INDYPENDENT

has open meetings every Tuesday at 7pm at 34 E. 29th St., 2nd floor.
Call for more info: 212.684.8112
Other NYC Indymedia Group Meetings:
Photo Team: 7pm Mondays
Video Team: 7pm Tuesdays

SAT NOV 12

11am – 5pm • \$10
MARKET AND EROTIC ART SHOW AND WORKSHOPS
An incredible array of unique toys, clothing and art. Join our community in a day of fun, learning and shopping.
LGBT Community Services Center
208 West 13th St.
btwn. 7th and Greenwich Aves.

SUN NOV 13 – 20

HIGHER EXPECTATIONS WEEK
400 organizations from across the country are coming together to stand up to Wal-Mart.
www.walmartwatch.com

MON NOV 14

7pm • FREE
PLANNING MEETING FOR SECOND ISSUE OF INDYKIDS, NYC-IMC's newest publication. Both adults and children are welcome to participate. To find out more call 212-684-8112 or e-mail indykids@indymedia.org.

8:15 pm • FREE
SUHEIR HAMMAD'S BOOK RELEASE AND POETRY READING OF HER FIRST COLLECTION, "ZAATARDIVA." Fresh from her Tony-Award winning stint in Def Poetry Jam on Broadway and a subsequent 51-city tour. The poems in this collection are at once seductive and dangerous; they are possessed by a singular lyricism and awareness, and her call to action has a major presence in her work.
Bowery Poetry Club
308 Bowery and Bleeker St.
Free and open to public.
www.bowerypoetry.com

6:30pm • every Monday
LADIES' BICYCLE REPAIR NIGHT
Come learn the basics of bicycle repair from female mechanics at our workshop designed by and for women. You will learn on our bicycles (you can apply what you've learned to your own bike on Thursday nights).
49 E. Houston St. (btwn. Mott and Mulberry)

THUR NOV 17

7:30 pm • Suggested donation: \$6/\$10/\$15
BOOK PARTY/READING: "The Alphabet Verses The Ghetto." Jessica Care moore-Poole is the founder and publisher of Moore Black Press, which has produced poetry collections by Saul Williams, asha bande, Etan Thomas and Ras Baraka, as well as several works of her own.
The Brecht Forum, 51 West St.

WED NOV 16

Noon • FREE
Rally & march against Pataki's corrupt & abusive NYS prison phone monopolies
41st St. & 6th Ave., Manhattan
(Bryant Park)

7:30 pm • FREE

"THE PEOPLE'S PENSION: THE ANARCHIST ORIGINS OF SOCIAL SECURITY AND TODAY'S BATTLE OVER ITS FUTURE" by Eric Laursen.
Clemente Soto Velez Cultural & Educational Center
107 Suffolk St.
(btwn Rivington and Delancey Sts.)

THU NOV 17

8:00pm • FREE
SCREENING: "WARRIORS: THE BIKE RACE"
During the all night race from the Bronx to Coney Island, riders got lost, blood was shed, police outwitted, and countless brain cells destroyed. **TIME'S UP!** Space, 49 E. Houston St. (btwn. Mott and Mulberry).

FRI NOV 18 & SAT NOV 19

Fri. 7:30pm, Sat. 10am – 4pm • \$25-\$35, Fri. forum only: \$10.
MARXIAN VS CONVENTIONAL ECONOMICS: THEIR DIFFERENCES & WHY THEY MATTER
TODAY Stephen Resnick & Richard Wolff.
The Brecht Forum, 451 West St.

FRI NOV 18

7pm • FREE
READING: MICKEY Z "50 AMERICAN REVOLUTIONS" Mickey Z, "political provocateur" highlights 50 reasons to be a proud, progressive patriot.
Bluestockings, 172 Allen St.
btwn. Stanton and Rivington

MON NOV 21

4:00pm • FREE
Internationally acclaimed journalist Amy Goodman, host of the national daily, radio/TV program Democracy Now!, speaks about independent media during a time of war.
New School University, Wollman Hall, 5th floor
66 West 12th St. (between 6 and 5th Aves.)

FRI NOV 25

6pm • Union Square South
STILL WE SPEAK
A rally to save our freedoms of speech and assembly. www.stillwespeak.org

MON NOV 28

7:30pm • Suggested donation: \$6/\$10/\$15
BOOK PARTY/FORUM: CHINESE AMERICA: A HISTORY IN THE MAKING Peter Kwong trace the genealogy of animosity toward Chinese Americans, from the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882 and their profiling as disloyal aliens during the McCarthy era. Peter Kwong is the author of several books, including Chinatown, N.Y. and Forbidden Workers.
The Brecht Forum
451 West St., mail@brechtforum.org

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

november december

WED NOV 30

8pm • Free
CELEBRATION: SIX YEARS SINCE SEATTLE!
Bluestockings will be hosting a celebration and informal discussion on some of the most inspirational anti-authoritarian, anti-capitalist movements that have taken hold around the world over the past five years. Come hear reports from participants at the Latin-American Conference on Participatory Democracy in Caracas and from members of Democratic Alternative, a Communalist Organization in Scandinavia. There will be food and drink to share. Bluestockings, 172 Allen St. btwn Stanton and Rivington

THURS DEC 1

7:30pm • Suggested donation: \$6/\$10/\$15
SURVIVING THE DIRTY WAR: A NATIONAL SPEAKING TOUR WITH PATRICIA ISASA FROM ARGENTINA • at 8:30pm a screening of her FILM, EL CERCO. At the time of her kidnapping in July of 1976, architect Patricia Indiana Isasa was 16 years old. She was taken by a commando group of the state police and was "disappeared" (held clandestinely) for three months. In 1997 Patricia initiated an investigation into her kidnappers' identities, still unknown to her.
The Brecht Forum, 451 West St.

SAT DEC 3

7pm • Sliding scale \$10-100
CISPES 25TH ANNIVERSARY PARTY

The Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador will be celebrating its 25th anniversary
Brecht Forum 451 West St. featuring special guests from El Salvador.
Afterwards, there will be a dance at 235 E. 23rd St. from 10p.m.-2a.m. Sliding scale \$5-50, no one turned away. For more, see cispes.org or call 212-465-8115.

WED DEC 7

7:30 pm • Suggested donation: \$6/\$10/\$15
THE ECONOMIC COLONIZATION OF IRAQ: AN INTENSIVE WORKSHOP This workshop will be an intensive introduction to the economic colonization of Iraq under occupation.
The Brecht Forum
451 West St.
mail@brechtforum.org

THURS DEC 15

7pm
The Vera List Center for Art and Politics presents: **POETICS BECOME LAW - AN EVENING WITH PAUL CHAN AND LYNNE STEWART.**

7pm

WORK IN PROGRESS: DOCUMENTARY RE:LYNNE FIRST CUT SCREENING AND INTERVIEW
The New School, Wollman Hall
66 West 12th St.,
(between 5th and 6th Ave.)

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needs a new office after November. *If you can help, please call:*

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